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THE  
WESLEYAN LOCAL PREACHERS'  
MANUAL;

BEING

A SERIES OF LECTURES

ON BIBLICAL SCIENCE, THEOLOGY, CHURCH HISTORY,  
&c., &c.

DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF LAY PREACHERS,

AND

ADAPTED TO SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS AND CHRISTIAN STUDENTS.

BY GEORGE SMITH, LL.D., F.S.A.,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,  
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE, &c.

THIRD EDITION.

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MANUAL

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ENTERED AT STATIONERS'-HALL.



LONDON:  
PRINTED BY JAMES NICHOLS,  
HOXTON-SQUARE.



TO THE

WESLEYAN LOCAL PREACHERS OF THE CAMBORNE CIRCUIT,

*These Lectures,*

PREPARED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR REQUEST,

DELIVERED UNDER THEIR CONTINUED ENCOURAGEMENT AND  
APPROVAL,

AND PUBLISHED IN DEFERENCE TO THEIR UNANIMOUS  
JUDGMENT,

*Are Respectfully and Affectionately Dedicated*

BY THE AUTHOR,

AS A SMALL TOKEN OF HIS APPRECIATION

OF THE HONOUR AND HAPPINESS WHICH HE HAS ENJOYED

FROM HIS CONNEXION WITH THEM

DURING THE FAR GREATER PART OF HIS LIFE.





## PREFACE.

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THE author avails himself of the usual privilege of a *preface*, to state in a few words the origin, object, and plan of the present work.

As indicated in the preceding Dedication, the idea of its production did not originate with himself. He had, indeed, for many years, highly appreciated the position occupied by Local Preachers, and deeply felt the difficulty experienced by many of them in obtaining that amount and kind of biblical and theological knowledge, so necessary for the efficient discharge of their arduous and important duties. But no means occurred to his mind of meeting this difficulty, and supplying the acknowledged want. This was done by his brethren, at the close of some of their regular Quarterly Meetings. They urged that he could deliver a course of Lectures to them on those occasions, on such branches of scriptural and religious knowledge as were more particularly applicable to the wants of Local Preachers, which would be of great service to themselves, and, if published, prove extensively useful to some of their brethren in other parts of the kingdom. Although his judgment did not unite in this sanguine opinion, he felt that the call, so far as it referred to the preparation and delivery of a few Lectures of this kind, was irresistible; and, under a painful sense of the arduous and responsible nature of the task, the course was begun. After several of these Lectures had been delivered, their publication being still urged as desirable and necessary, they were successively sent to the press, published in quarterly numbers, and are at length presented to the public in their present form.

This plain and unvarnished statement is given in justice to the author and his brethren, and not for the purpose of

averting from him the entire responsibility of the attempt to meet what has been regarded as a great and pressing want. This responsibility, whether it respects the Wesleyan Connexion or the Christian public at large, is fully and entirely his own. He has, indeed, most anxiously endeavoured to avoid expressing any sentiment calculated to give offence, or to excite difference of opinion. But if in this or in other respects he has failed, the fault is his own. He has done his best to comply with the request of his brethren, has taken counsel with friends in whose judgment he has the greatest confidence, and is content to the fullest extent to bear the whole responsibility of the effort.

The object of the book is to afford, within as limited a compass and price as possible, a compendium of that kind of information which is adapted to the wants and circumstances of Local Preachers. Considerable difficulty was felt in defining this object,—from the doubt as to what amount of knowledge the student should be supposed to possess, before he entered on the study of this Manual. After mature consideration, it was thought best to adapt it to the case of those who, having obtained a saving acquaintance with spiritual religion, possessed very slender means of education, beyond an ability to read the Bible and the Wesleyan Hymn-Book, and a pleasing familiarity with their contents. It was foreseen that this course would probably render parts of it distasteful, and possibly useless, to those who in their youth had been favoured with even an ordinary education. But it was judged most desirable to incur even this risk, rather than to overlook the pressing need of those who were in yet more unfavourable circumstances. No fact is more certain, than that, throughout the entire history of Methodism, persons wholly destitute of educational culture have been, through the instrumentality of the Wesleyan ministry, brought to a knowledge of God ; and that in all times and places some of those are called of God to preach the gospel to their fellow-men. In a production like the present, the case of



such demanded, and it is hoped has received, due attention. Assuming, then, the humble circumstances and limited knowledge of a pious, zealous, energetic young man, it has been the object of the author, in the following sheets, to afford him such means as, under the Divine blessing, may enable him to discharge the duties of the office to which he is called, with satisfaction to his own mind, and benefit to the church of Christ. Whilst, however, it has been deemed proper to do this, the information furnished is not confined to the case of these persons, but is in many respects such as may be very useful to those who have been favoured with a liberal education.

To the question, "How is this attempted to be done?" the book may be left to supply an answer. But a few words on this head, also, are necessary. From what has been already said, it became essential to the design of the work that it should communicate some satisfactory information respecting the proper use of words, and the laws which regulate the construction of language. The Bible was also to be exhibited in its true and proper character as a Divine revelation, and the varied and interesting subjects contained in the different books of which it is composed, and the grand doctrines which they were severally intended to teach. Means were also to be devised for aiding the student rightly to understand the sacred text, and to employ it effectively as the basis of his pulpit discourses: while no less necessary was it that ample information should be given as to the effect of this revelation, on human conduct and experience, in Old-Testament times, as well as in those of the gospel.

These important objects have been attempted in the following Manual. The first Lecture relates to the Local Preacher and his Work. The second proves the inspiration, genuineness, and authenticity of the sacred books. The three following Lectures exhibit the contents of every book composing the Bible, the person and design of each author, with an analysis of the several books, which not only shows their scope and character, but gives almost the

subject of every chapter in the whole Bible. These are followed by three others, which exhibit the principal doctrines of holy scripture under these prominent heads:—The Teaching of the Scriptures respecting the Character and Triune Personality of God:—The redeeming Work of Christ:—And Personal Salvation. Having thus dealt with the Bible and its teaching, we proceed to ascertain its actual effect on mankind. This inquiry occupies three other Lectures:—The Old-Testament Church:—The Planting of the Christian Church and its Progress to the Time of Constantine:—The History of the Church from Constantine to the Reformation. Thus far it has been the object of the author to give, in a condensed form, a wide range of biblical and religious information. Having done this, he proceeds to teach its application to the case of a Preacher. Accordingly a Lecture on the Use of Words and of Language succeeds; which is followed by one explaining the Principles and Use of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation; after which a Lecture on Preaching completes the volume.

Small as the work is, the author is not aware that he has omitted any important class of information necessary for a Local Preacher. He has not confined himself to giving rules, but has always endeavoured to put the young student in the way of using his Bible for himself.

Although the author has studiously avoided *generalizing*, so as to make the volume less useful to those for whom it is primarily intended, in order to promote its wider circulation; he is not without hope that, in its present form, it may be useful to Christian students generally, and especially to Sunday-school teachers.

No production ever engaged a larger measure of the author's effort and concern than the present; and never did he more sincerely and fervently implore the blessing of God on the production of his pen, than he does on that which is now presented to the Christian church.

TREVU, CAMBORNE,

February 26th, 1855.



## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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THE manner in which this volume has been received, both in England and America, has confirmed the author's hopes that it is adapted to be useful to that pious and numerous class of labourers in the Lord's vineyard for whose benefit it was expressly prepared.

The numerous testimonies which the author has received that the work has rendered essential benefit to Local Preachers, and to other studious young men, have given him great pleasure, and called forth his devout thanksgiving to the Author of all good. But this pleasure has been alloyed by regret, so often as he has been informed that the large size, and consequent price of the work, have prevented many of the most needy of the Local Preachers from availing themselves of its aid.

After a careful consideration of the subject, the author cannot reconcile his mind to any abridgment of the volume, either by increased condensation, or by the omission of any part of its contents. At the same time he is most anxious to place the "Manual" within the reach of the poorest Local Preacher in the land. For this purpose, although the price (*Seven Shillings and Sixpence*) at which the previous editions have been sold has not paid the cost of its preparation, he has reduced the price of this edition to *Five Shillings*; a measure which he hopes will lead to a much wider circulation of the book.

Committing the work afresh to the gracious benediction of Him without whom nothing is "wise, or holy, or good," the author hopes it will be made increasingly useful to the church and the world.

TREVU, CAMBORNE,

*January 9th, 1858.*

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# THE LOCAL PREACHERS' MANUAL.

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## LECTURE I.

### THE LOCAL PREACHER, AND HIS WORK.

THE Object of these Lectures—Peculiar Difficulty of a Local Preacher's Position—Sketch of the Contents of the Manual—Plan of this Lecture—Personal religious Experience—A Call to Preach—Necessity for continued personal Piety—Is THERE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY FOR LAYMEN TO PREACH?—Usage of the Jewish Church—Apostolic Practice—Judgment of the primitive Church—Methodism in this respect eminently scriptural and orthodox—Important Distinction between Ministers and Local Preachers—WHAT CONSTITUTES REASONABLE PROOF OF A CALL TO PREACH?—A godly Experience—Suitable Gifts—Fruits—Vast Importance of particular Care in the Admission of Local Preachers—THE GREAT OBJECT OF PREACHING—To repel the Tyranny of Satan—To make an End of Sin—To insure the Salvation of Men—The Promotion of the Glory and Kingdom of Christ—THE NATURE OF PREACHING—Speaking to Men so as to lead them to the Cross of Christ, and to build them up in Holiness—To exhort and urge them to Salvation—And to minister unto them Gospel Consolation—DIFFICULTY AND DISCOURAGEMENTS CONNECTED WITH A PREACHER'S WORK—Fluctuations of Feeling in religious Experience sometimes through temporal Circumstances—Difficulty in dealing with a Text—In delivering a Sermon—And in maintaining a single-minded Desire to save Souls—Want of Books, and of Time, and Means for mental Improvement—ENCOURAGEMENTS OF A LOCAL PREACHER—The Presence of Christ—The Assurance that his Message of Mercy is in Accordance with the Divine Will—The Desire to save Souls in direct Accordance with the Mind of Christ, and promotive of personal Growth in Grace—BLESSEDNESS OF THE PREACHER'S WORK—Joy resulting from being instrumentally useful—Final Rest and Reward—Caution against Error—Subjects for Study—Paramount Importance of revealed Truth—Exhortation to Diligence.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

IN soliciting your attention to this, the first of a course of Lectures, intended, under the Divine blessing, to minister, to some extent at least, to your edification and improvement, I lose much of that diffidence and embarrassment which I should

otherwise feel, in entering on an untrodden path, by the recollection that the attempt did not originate in any vanity or zeal of mine, but in the earnest and unanimous request of the local preachers of my own circuit. What was delivered to them at the close of their quarterly-meetings, is now revised, and offered to our fellow-labourers in the same vocation throughout the Connexion.

It may be regarded as a singular and unpromising circumstance, that an attempt to benefit local preachers generally should originate in a very remote country circuit, whilst there are found in the great centres of learning, intelligence, and connexional influence, many, who are possessed of ability and leisure to which I am an entire stranger. Under ordinary circumstances this would have prevented me from engaging in a work so onerous and full of difficulty. But if my brethren will bear with me, I will, in all Christian simplicity and candour, account for my compliance with the request of my co-labourers in the delivery and publication of these Lectures.

I have for many years carefully and painfully considered the duties and the difficulties peculiar to the work in which we are engaged,—preaching the gospel of Christ. I speak for myself confidently, and I think may venture to do so on behalf of the great body of my brethren. I would never have appeared in a pulpit, or have dared to deliver a sermon, but from a deep, spiritual, unconquerable conviction, that “a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me ;” “for necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.” This being our call, and our Christian duty, what means are placed within our reach to assist us in filling up the claims of this high vocation? Still bound to keep our position in civil society, unseparated from our temporal concerns by the very nature of our calling, we continue to perform our secular engagements, and bear our full share of the ordinary toil, and trouble, and burden of every-day life ; and yet have to be found, on the return of every sabbath, ready to go forth, at the bidding of the Holy Spirit, and under the direction of the church, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to our perishing fellow-men. When it is remembered, that these are the circumstances not of a few persons in any particular locality, but of many thousands who are scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land, and who, although occupying every grade of civil society, are more generally found among the labouring classes ; it will be regarded as a notable fact, that hitherto so little has been done



to meet their peculiar case, and to aid them in acquiring that knowledge which is so obviously necessary to the efficient discharge of their important duties.

This circumstance decided my wavering mind, and induced me to comply with the request of my friends. For although I feel equally indisposed and unworthy to take the place of a teacher of my brother local preachers, I have so vivid a perception of the difficulties with which many, very many, of the poorer and younger of them have to struggle, that I determined at least to attempt something for their aid, earnestly hoping that those of the body who possess more ample means of instruction, will not frown on this well-meant endeavour to benefit our less-favoured brethren.

It may be convenient here to give an outline of the whole course. In these Lectures, then, which may extend to about sixteen in number, I propose to give—A summary of the arguments in proof of the authenticity, inspiration, and independent authority of holy scripture—A brief account of the writers of the sacred books, and of their scope, character, and contents—An outline of the doctrines of holy scripture, regarded in their experimental and practical bearing on the salvation of man—A sketch of the history of the church—Some hints on biblical criticism, and the means to be adopted for finding the true signification of difficult texts—Advice respecting preparation for the pulpit, and the composition of sermons; with some information on language and the choice of words—A synopsis of general knowledge; with occasional references to other kindred subjects.

As an introduction, I propose in the present discourse to discuss the position, character, and responsibility of a local preacher, together with the object, nature, difficulties, and encouragements of his work.

In entering upon this subject, it will be necessary at once plainly and pointedly to advert to the personal religious experience, out of which all this appointment, privilege, and course of duty arises. This is too often overlooked, neglected, or silently assumed, by those who refer to the position of local preachers. It cannot, however, be too prominently set forth, that personal religion is the basis of all that the local preacher is, and of all that he has to do.

A man is convinced, deeply and painfully convinced, that he is a sinner, and as such subject to the condemnation of God, and in danger of everlasting death. Under these impressions he is led to hate sin as the cause of all his sorrow and peril, to strive

against its wide range of influence with all his might, and to pray earnestly for Divine aid and forgiveness. In the process of this penitential course, his Bible, his pious friends, and his inward feeling prompted by the Divine Spirit, lead him from every effort of self, from every worldly resource, and from every carnal ground of hope and confidence, to Jesus as the Lamb of God slain to take away the sin of the world. Here a vital struggle takes place. His will rebels, his reason argues, his proud morality refuses to submit : but it is all in vain. No other way of escape or refuge is found ; and at length he is led to believe with his heart on the Lord Jesus, trusting in him as his only Saviour, and in the atonement of his blood as the only ground of his hope for mercy. Thus believing, he is saved ; his load of guilt is removed ; a sweet sense of the Divine favour succeeds ; his heart exultingly feels that God is his Father ; he is not only pardoned, but adopted into the family of heaven ; and, renewed in righteousness by the power of the Holy Ghost, he goes on his way rejoicing.

Having been thus “ translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son,” he holds on his way, basking in the smile of heaven, and delighting to do the will of Him who has thus gloriously made him alive from the dead. But whilst prosecuting this course of pious devotedness, he cannot forget “ the hole of the pit” from which he has been drawn, and the thralldom of Satan from which he has been delivered. His spirit yearns over those who are still in their sins. His love to God leads him to desire that every human being would love and serve him. His conviction of the evil of sin induces him to pity those who are still “ led captive by the devil at his will ;” whilst his confidence in Jesus as a Saviour, able and willing to save to the uttermost, assures him that the vilest and worst of sinners may come and find abundant mercy. Impelled by these motives, he reproves sin, exhorts sinners, and besieges a throne of grace for the salvation of perishing men. Yet all this does not make a man a preacher. Over and above these powerful motives and influences, which are common to every pious mind, the Holy Spirit influences some men to aim at the glory of God and the salvation of men by the preaching of the gospel. The manner in which this influence acts, and the kind of impression formed under its guidance, are so various in different minds, that it is not possible even to sketch a type of the operation. Yet it may be safely affirmed, that it usually leads to this result—a deep conviction of its being the religious duty of that individual who is under its influence, to preach the



gospel of Christ to his fellow-men. The Wesleyan section of the church, fully recognising this operation of the Holy Spirit, has made the necessary arrangements for the employment of persons thus called of God, in a manner which is judged to be the most conducive to his glory, and to the enlargement and edification of the church.

In addressing myself to this body of labourers in the Lord's vineyard, I account it right to remind you, my brethren, of this religious origin of the office you sustain. It is not because of superior wisdom or learning, that we are the subjects of this appointment: many who sit to listen to our exhortations from week to week, are by far our superiors in these respects. Nor is it on account of our eloquence, talent, or zeal: on the contrary, in many instances, "God hath chosen the weak things of the world," that the work may be seen to be of God and not of man. Our appointment arises out of our avowed conversion to God, our zeal for the honour of the Saviour, our love for souls, and our call by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel; and, in consequence, our entire conduct, our diligent preparation for this important duty, the scope, object, and end of our pulpit addresses, and all our views respecting our peculiar connexional position, ought to be in accordance with the high and holy character of our vocation.

We cannot too earnestly labour to realise in our own minds, and to impress on those of our brethren, that this religious experience and Divine influence is not merely the means and way to the attainment of office, but rather the essential character which is to be maintained and evinced by every local preacher in his entire course of action, from its commencement to its close. The validity of our claim to be preachers necessarily depends on this; and any departure from this pure and spiritual line of conduct must always be not only detrimental to our success, but also, if continued, ruinous to our position and our peace.

But there are those who impugn our right to preach; and who, if they had the power, would, perhaps with great sincerity, forbid our preaching, and think they did good service to the Christian cause by compelling us to silence. We must not be offended at this. These individuals have an indefeasible right to form their own opinion on this subject. Nor do I feel at all disposed to discuss this question in a controversial manner and spirit. Yet I regard it due to myself, and to you, my fellow-labourers, to state, candidly and distinctly, the nature and extent of a local preacher's claims as a divinely-appointed agent in the church of Christ.

We regard ourselves, then, as called of Jesus Christ, the Great Head of the church, to preach his gospel. We are not merely teachers, tolerated and authorized to communicate information to our fellows; but we are preachers of the word of God, really and truly called to this office by Divine appointment, and by the voice of the church.

It may be necessary, however, to assign our reasons for the position we occupy. Of course, the first reference should be to holy scripture. Does, then, the New Testament teach, that the ability and the authority to preach the gospel are limited to any distinct class or order of men? As the institutions of the Christian church were, to some extent, fashioned according to the usages which previously obtained among the Hebrews, it may be desirable, in the first instance, to ascertain what was the practice in this respect at the close of the preceding dispensation.

It is an undoubted fact, that the Jews, tenacious as they were of the law, and exact in the observance of its most minute requirements, never regarded preaching, or the delivery of religious discourses for the godly edification of the people by any person, as an invasion of the priest's office, or as in itself an improper thing. It is well known, that the scribes, who were the authorized expounders of the law, and the ordinary channel through which religious discourses were addressed to the people, were neither priests nor generally even Levites; very many of them being of the tribe of Simeon. We have, in fact, a case in point in the preaching of Jesus Christ himself. Anxious as the authorities were to silence this Divine Teacher, they never dared to object that his preaching was irregular, or contrary to the strict tenor of Mosaic law and usage, although he was of the tribe of Judah. Nor was there any objection, on this ground, to the preaching of the apostles. Hence we find their teaching not only tolerated by the rulers of the Jewish synagogues, but solicited. So it was at Antioch in Pisidia, where we find them sending this message unto Paul and Barnabas, who had just come into the city,—“Men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” (Acts xiii. 15.)

But it will perhaps be objected, that a different order and arrangement obtain in the Christian church. Let us first inquire into apostolic rule and practice in this respect. Did the gospel dispensation, then, limit and restrict the privilege and duty of delivering religious discourses for the edification of the people? We feel inclined to believe, that, on the contrary, the gospel greatly enlarged these privileges and duties. What



was the peculiar distinctive feature of the new and better covenant, as set forth in the glowing language of prophecy? "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." (Acts ii. 17.) That this refers to preaching, is evident from the fact, that Peter declares the impassioned exhortations of the believers on the day of Pentecost to have been a fulfilment of this very prophecy.

It is further manifest, that the practice of the church whilst under the immediate direction of the apostles fully justifies these views. The first thing done in the way of organization by the believers, was the appointment of deacons. These men were selected and appointed to take on themselves the secular affairs of the newly-formed Christian community, that the apostles might give undivided attention "to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." But were these men, thus specially charged with secular care, prevented from preaching? On the contrary, some of them were among the most able and successful preachers: Stephen and Philip are well-known instances. Nor is there the slightest foundation for the surmise, that they derived this right and power to preach from their ordination as deacons, or from their being a lower order of ministers. On the contrary, the same course was taken by the believers generally. Hence, when dispersed from Jerusalem by the fierce persecution which arose on the death of Stephen, we are told, "They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts viii. 4.)

When, however, we urge a scriptural argument of this kind, we are sure to be met with the objection, that such portions of scripture must be understood as explained by the practice of the early church, which, it is too hastily concluded, limited the right of preaching to ordained ministers. In the first place, then, the early history of the church attests the soundness of the opinions which have been advanced. The ancient author of the Commentary on the Epistles, under the name of St. Ambrose, thus distinctly states the case: "In the beginning of Christianity, for the augmentation and increase of the church, a general commission was granted unto all, both to preach the gospel, and baptize."\* Now whether this be perfectly accurate in principle or otherwise, it sufficiently indicates the practice of the primitive church. We have, however, a case clearly in point. Origen, who was born about A.D. 185, and became one

\* Com. in Ephes. iv.

of the most eminent Christian scholars of his day, when travelling in Palestine before his ordination, was invited to preach by Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, and by Theoctistus, bishop of Cæsarea; and, having complied with their request, Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, (Origen's native city,) remonstrated with the two liberal prelates against what he regarded as an irregularity in inviting an unordained person to preach. The bishop of Jerusalem replied, assuring him "he was much mistaken, for it was an usual thing in many places, where men were well qualified to edify the brethren, for bishops to entreat them to preach to the people."\* This usage is further proved by a distinct canon enacted at the Fourth Council of Carthage, held A.D. 399; which forbids "a layman to preach in the presence of the clergy, except they request him to do it." These examples, which might be multiplied, clearly show that laymen did preach; but that, from time to time, regulations became necessary in respect of their exercises, in order to maintain a suitable order in the church.

Acting from the beginning under these scriptural and primitive principles, Methodism has recognised the call of certain laymen to preach, and made the necessary arrangements for rendering their labours beneficial to the religious body with which they are associated. Among the advantages derived to our Connexion from the services of the local preachers, not the least is the means thereby afforded of testing the efficiency of men before taking them out into the ministry. St. Paul, in giving directions for the appointment of presbyters, says, "Let these also first be proved." (1 Tim. iii. 10.) How can this be done, except a man is allowed to preach before ordination? Without in any way referring to other sections of the church, and certainly without casting any imputation on them, it is perfectly allowable for us to regard this institution as affording our body decided and important advantages, and placing it in an eminent degree on a scriptural foundation, and in accordance with the purest models of Christian antiquity.

But, whilst fully prepared to assert and maintain that laymen are often called of God to preach his holy truth, and are therefore properly appointed by the church to the performance of this important duty, it must not be supposed that they are in consequence identical with Christian ministers. This has been with confidence asserted; but it is a great error.

Our claim, my brethren, is a claim to preach as laymen.

\* Bingham, book v. p. 89.



We do not forego our temporal position ; we do not renounce our secular avocations ; most of us are still diligent in business, and lawfully entangled with the affairs of this world ; and yet we feel called of God to preach his truth, and receive from his church the opportunity of fulfilling our vocation. There may be many among us, who, if the church had come up to its full measure of duty and liberality, would even now have been called to occupy a place in the ministry either at home or abroad. But at present neither the arrangements of Divine Providence, nor the appointment of the church, has placed us in that position. But we cannot, on this account, doubt, that the Great Head of the church has willed the entire separation of some of his servants from all worldly employment, that they may devote their undivided care and energy to the work of the ministry. Hence Jesus called away his first ministers from their secular business, and denominated them apostles or “persons sent ;” and St. Paul compares the ministerial office with that of a soldier, asserting, that “no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life ;” and so the minister is enjoined to “endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

These two points are therefore maintained by the Wesleyan body with undeviating firmness. First : That Christ has called certain men to retire from all worldly business, and devote themselves exclusively to the work of the ministry ; and the church, recognising such a call, has made provision for their temporal support. Secondly : That, amongst the wide range of religious duty devolving on those Christians who are not thus called to the ministry, some are divinely prompted and qualified to preach ; and, this appointment being also admitted, arrangements have been made by which the pious exercise of their gifts and graces may be used for great benefit to the church.

It may be desirable to refer briefly to the very peculiar position which we are thus called to occupy :—Preachers, and yet still pursuing our usual course of business in the world : Men of business, and yet employed on the sabbath days in preaching the gospel to our fellow-men. We are thus placed in a very singular, I might say unique, position both in respect of the church and the world. I may here observe, what I shall hereafter have to urge at some length, that whilst the peculiarity of our position produces in many instances great difficulty, it involves high, weighty, and awful responsibility. We have, my brethren, to pass through our secular concerns with such sanctification of spirit, and uprightness of mind, that nothing we do or say may detract from the weight of our words

on the sabbath day. We have so diligently to study, and so earnestly to pray, for Divine illumination and guidance, that, whilst engaged in our pulpit exercises, we may prove ourselves to be men who understand their duty, and have ability to perform it.

But it may be asked, "What constitutes reasonable proof that an individual is really called of God to preach the gospel?" This is an important question, and one that deserves a full and explicit answer. I shall never forget the time, or the feelings which agitated my mind, when I had to solve it on my own account. It may be premised, that, in dealing with an inquiry of this kind, we must assume that there is a perfect sincerity of purpose, and, in fact, a transparency of character; so that the state of the mind of the individual thus impressed may be fully discerned. This being the case, I would say that such a person must first know God, and enjoy a sense of his pardoning mercy. That God should appoint sinners alienated from him by wicked works, and in actual rebellion against his authority, to proclaim his pardoning mercy to mankind, is out of the question. There is no call of the Divine Spirit more powerful than the universal one from sin to holiness. That those who are deaf and impervious to this primary injunction of Divine grace, should attend to any other,—that a man who will not submit to Divine Mercy himself, should be called to recommend and enjoin such submission on the part of others,—seems absurd. When, therefore, we have to consider an alleged call to preach the gospel, we have first to ascertain whether there is satisfactory proof that the man is truly converted to God, and walking in the enjoyment of his favour. I think we may safely go a step farther than this, and inquire whether the individual gives evidence that he is earnestly seeking an increase of holiness, and careful to maintain a pure and unblamable course of conduct in the world. On the principle previously laid down, we have no right to believe that a person who does not live and act under a prevalent desire to obey and please God as a ruling motive of his life, will be called to any special duty of Divine appointment.

I have little doubt that my brethren will fully go with me in these conclusions. With me, you are well aware, that the most fearful cause of mischief to the interests of religion in our highly favoured land, during the last century, has been the appointment of unconverted and even wicked men to minister the sacred ordinances of Christianity in the public worship of God. But while we unite in deprecating this evil, let us be fully

alive to the danger to which we all stand exposed. Alienation from God, and disobedience to his will, must under all circumstances produce similar results. Let us therefore fear lest we should be moved away from our steadfastness. It is true that if one who as a converted man has been called to preach should lose his religion, and become worldly in the temper of his mind, and carnal in his affections and desires, he might not adulterate the truth in his ministrations; nay, he might even continue to urge with some earnestness the pure doctrines of the gospel. But it is clear to the plainest capacity, that, whilst in such a state of mind, his doing this is merely an exercise of human judgment and opinion. The high and holy love for souls which formerly animated him, the deep and jealous interest in his Saviour's honour and glory, which imbued all his thoughts and gave life and power to all his words, have passed away. These cannot breathe and burn in a soul alienated from the life of God. Whilst, then, we deprecate the appointment of carnal, godless, or wicked men, anywhere or under any circumstances, to conduct the ordinances of Christian worship, let us fully recognise the alarming fact, that we have only to lose the life and power of religion out of our own souls, and the same essential evil will be introduced by us, into that section of the church which is the object of our choice and love. The validity of a call to preach must therefore arise out of this pious and sanctified state of mind, and can only be maintained, in all its fulness of power and authority, by the continuance of the same godly experience, and apprehension of the Divine favour and love.

But, in judging of an alleged call to preach, we have, Secondly, to inquire whether the parties have gifts for the work. "Have they," asked John Wesley, "in some tolerable degree, a clear, sound understanding, a right judgment in the things of God, a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?" If these qualities of mind are found in connexion with decided piety, and the person feels an inward persuasion that he is called to preach, there appears sufficient reason for the church to entertain his case, and to allow him a trial.

But, before this call is fully admitted, the founder of Methodism required a Third evidence of its genuineness. "Have they," he proceeded to ask, "fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin and converted to God by their preaching?" I cannot refrain from recording my opinion, that it would have been well for our section of the church if this element of John-Wesley Methodism



had been maintained among us with more prominence and power in respect of local preachers. It is alleged, and with much propriety, that a great change has come over the state of society in our country during the last hundred years. But I do not think this should in any measure weaken the test which was then properly applied to a call to preach. In receiving persons, therefore, as local preachers, I believe that the inquiry respecting “fruit” during the period of probation ought to be pressed with great earnestness and fidelity. Preaching, indeed, is eminently a utilitarian institution. It was not appointed for its own sake, but on account of its results. He, therefore, is not the best preacher who attracts the largest congregation, or who affords the greatest amount of pleasure to his auditory; but he who is instrumentally the means of the largest amount of spiritual good to the people.

On this account it has for a long time appeared to me, that an alteration respecting the manner of receiving local preachers might with great advantage be introduced into our system. Preachers are perhaps naturally inclined to scrutinise the manner of a candidate,—his manner of constructing and of delivering a sermon, and other peculiarities of various kinds. I think it would be an improvement if, before a preacher is fully received on the Plan of any circuit, the quarterly meeting did pronounce their opinion in his favour. This is required in the case of the recommendation of a minister, and would be, I incline to think, a great advantage, if extended to the full admission of local preachers; inasmuch as, coming from the more enlightened and experienced of our hearers, it would in all probability more directly refer to the practical effect,—the *fruit* of a candidate’s preaching, than to any thing respecting his mode or manner.

You perceive, my brethren, that I speak with perfect freedom on these subjects. I can well imagine that, if such suggestions were made by one holding any other office in our societies, they might be received with some misgivings, if not with suspicions. I really do not feel called upon to guard myself against any thing of the kind. Identified with you in your call, trial, labour, and duty, for more than thirty years, I am persuaded that our great object must be to do the will of our heavenly Father. Those who are strangers to our feelings and views, may think that any more stringent manner of admission would be distasteful to our body. But supposing that in any circuit in the island, there is one man tolerated as a local preacher who ought not, either on account of his piety, call, or qualifications, to be a member of

that body ; who, let me ask, suffers most severely the consequences of the error or indiscretion ? The circuit, and the several congregations where he is called to labour, may have cause to regret it ; but the person himself is the most heavily punished. Placed in a false position, like the fabled Sisyphus or Tantalus, he is ever labouring to accomplish an impossibility, and spends his time

“In dropping buckets into empty wells,  
And growing old in drawing nothing up.”

Yes ; for any error of this kind, the individual himself, and, next to him, his brethren, have to pay the severest penalty.

I now pass on to notice more particularly the object, nature, difficulties, and encouragements of our work.

*A call to preach,—being recognised as a preacher,*—these expressions are very frequently taken to convey nothing more than some kind of grade, privilege, or *status* in society. All our habits of thought and feeling tend to a kind of conventionalism, by which the most sacred institutions are reduced to a mere common-place character. And it is to be feared that our continual use of the holy Bible, and our daily reference to its sacred contents, not unfrequently blunt the force of the most important truth, and render communications which should be imbued with perpetual electric power, uninfluential, if not insipid. *A call to preach*—And what is the object of preaching ? We may say, To counteract and repel the influence of Satan ; to put an end to the practice of sin ; to save man from condemnation, and to bring him into the experience of the Divine favour ; and to promote the honour of God, and the establishment of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the world. But how imperfectly do these words affect the mind ! It is most important, my brethren, that we should have strong and abiding impressions on this subject. This, in fact, is absolutely necessary, in order to our engaging in these labours with becoming earnestness, zeal, and persevering fidelity. Allow me, then, for a few minutes to dwell on each of these aspects of our work.

We have heard of unjust, lawless, tyrannical aggression on the liberty and happiness of mankind. Despotic conquerors and rulers have been regarded with horror, and remembered with execration. And what efforts have not been made to avert the evils thus inflicted, and to obtain liberty and emancipation for those who are enslaved ? The most brilliant displays of impassioned oratory have been called forth ; the

burning power of poetry has been employed; the most daring deeds of heroism have been performed. To effect this object, men have set at nought dungeons, tortures, and death. And yet, search human history from the loss of Paradise until this day; trace the progress of tyranny in the blood which it has shed; or ponder over the condition of the oppressed and the slave from the birth of Moses to the last torture endured by the branded African in America; and where will you find any thing to compare with the tyranny of Satan? Mark, and fully recognise, his proud and cruel aggression on human happiness. How gloriously rich and happy was man's primitive condition! How unutterably debased and miserable is the servant of sin! See how fully the fatal power has been extended over the human mind:—every attribute enslaved, every passion perverted; all the affections debased; the whole mind, in fact, led captive by the devil at his will. Observe the toil, the suffering, the sorrow, to which the wretched sons of vice voluntarily submit under the constraining power of this “father of lies;” and then turn your eye from these thousand proofs that “the way of transgressors is hard,” to their future destiny. For what do men endure the tyranny of Satan, and renounce the joys of piety, and the elevation of virtue? For eternal torment; for a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone! And yet, my brethren, the message of mercy with which we are charged, the gospel of Christ's salvation which we are called to publish, is the divinely-appointed means of repelling this Satanic aggression, and rescuing humanity from the tyranny of the destroyer. In millions of cases, it has produced these results. Even we ourselves are witnesses of its power; and multitudes around us, who were once bound in this slavish captivity, are now rejoicing in the liberty of the children of God. And we know the destiny of the destroyer: by this very agency his rule shall be broken, his kingdom shall perish, he shall be driven to his own darkness; and the sovereignty of Jesus shall be universal, and all nations shall flow into it. This is our vocation,—preaching the pure word of life as the grand antidote against all the guile, craft, and power of the devil.

We also wage war with sin. Wide indeed have been its ravages, fearful the ruin it has occasioned; it has, in truth, “reigned unto death.” And yet, how reconciled even professing Christians are to the sight and sound of this foul enormity! We ourselves see and feel every day, that we have need to guard our hearts with the utmost diligence, lest we should be beguiled



to tolerate and allow this destroying agent in some of its seducing and delusive forms. We may always assure ourselves, by serious self-examination, that our hearts are too insensible to the consequences of this direful spiritual poison on those around us. We have hearts to feel for suffering humanity. If a neighbour breaks a limb, or has his house burned, or sustains any great reverse in his circumstances, we can sorrow for and sincerely pity the subject of severe affliction. But we can hear persons lie, and see them act wickedly, and foully disobey and dishonour God; and yet we do not feel the same gushing pity, the same sorrowful compassion. Why is this? Is it because we do not believe sin to be the greatest calamity that can possibly befall a human being? Do we not well know, that no sorrow, suffering, privation, or loss, that can befall humanity, can equal in magnitude the evil consequences of sin? What a Babel, Aceldama, Golgotha has not sin made this beautiful world! Trace the annals of nations, the records of crime, the history of vice; every where you will see proofs of the prevalence and power of sin. And yet the gospel of salvation was devised by Heaven, and wrought out in the boundless love and wisdom of God, "to make an end of sin." Yes, the word of life, the promises of grace, the finished atonement of Jesus, which you and I are called to proclaim, is the sovereign specific for this terrible malady, this fearful ruin. You well know when and how this happy result was wrought in you; how the love of sin was destroyed, the power of sin broken, the guilt of sin removed, and, in some at least, the very inbeing of sin purged away. O, my brethren, do we always act, and live, and preach, as those who are conscious of possessing this sovereign remedy for a world's misery? Let us afresh charge on our hearts the magnitude of our vocation. Let us contrast our call with the progress of sin. The Lord's arm is not shortened, his ear is not heavy, his compassion is not blunted: he still "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Let us then make known this glorious message, that the great end may be accomplished, and sin in all its soul-destroying power taken away. Let us meet the prevailing rebellion against God, by an efficient proclamation of his saving mercy.

Another aspect of the object of preaching, is the salvation of men from the condemnation of God into the enjoyment of a sweet sense of his favour. It is fully admitted, and should by us be deeply lamented, that the far greater part of those whom we address have a very imperfect sense of the grand and glorious

transition which these terms describe. Men of the world do not feel this weight of condemnation; they are, to a fearful extent, blind and dead to the bliss resulting from an experience of the Divine favour. They neither understand the real nature and extent of the evil, nor can they conceive the magnitude of the blessing; and, if ever saved, they must be roused from this spiritual lethargy, by the word of God and the influence of his Spirit. This is our work. We are useful or useless, as we are successful or unsuccessful in these efforts. But the great danger of our failure arises from the probability that we shall imbibe the views of the carnal and worldly on these subjects, rather than imbue the worldly with ours. Be assured, we are exposed to great peril on this head. We mix up in business, in family associations, in social converse, with those who are carnal and unconverted: we see much in them to admire, to esteem, and to love. These qualities are seen and felt: they are uppermost and always present: it is therefore difficult to keep on our minds a continual and distinct recognition of the great truths:—"He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him." "The wages of sin is death." "The wicked shall be turned into hell." Yet these are eternal verities, universally applicable to the children of men. And, however our sympathies may be affected, or our judgments warped, these principles will rule supreme in the councils of heaven, and in the award of the final destiny of man. We have need, therefore, to urge on our minds, memories, and judgments, these solemn and affecting truths. In the estimation of the world, and even of that of many professing Christians, it is not recognised as a matter of great moment whether a man is what is called a respectable moral man, or a consistent Christian. And yet, what has not Heaven done to effect his transition from the one state to the other? All the profound mysteries involved in the scheme of redemption,—the wonderful revelation of a Triune Deity,—the miracles and prophecies attesting the verity of holy scripture,—the amazing incarnation, humiliation, life, labours, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus,—the advent of the Holy Ghost,—the continual presence and mediatorial reign of the Lord Jesus,—all, all have arisen out of the necessity of raising man from the influence of unsanctified intellect and lifeless morality, to the experience of the favour and the image of God. Let us, then, chasten our earthly prejudices by the example of heaven, and gather from the light of holy scripture clear and sound views of the spiritual ruin of man, and the

necessity of his obtaining salvation; and let all our addresses, our prayers, our manner, our living experience, evince the depth and overwhelming power of these convictions.

The promotion of the Divine honour, the extension of the kingdom of Christ in the world, is also to be regarded as a very prominent object of our preaching. It may be feared, that this, which ought to constitute a most weighty and influential motive with us, is too seldom properly considered or adequately estimated. Yet what is made more prominent as a Christian duty in the teaching of Christ and his apostles? The assertion of universal and unlimited sovereignty by Jesus Christ was placed at the foundation of the apostolic commission:—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.) And hence Peter claimed for his Divine Master the honour and glory of which David had prophesied, asserting that he was "by the right hand of God exalted,"—that indeed God had constituted "that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." And this exaltation is to be recognised; for "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii. 9—11.) The accomplishment of this glorious result is the great end of all our work. But it is perhaps no where so beautifully and effectively set forth, as by our Lord himself in his inimitable prayer. His disciples, becoming conscious of their spiritual need and dependence on Divine aid, in proportion to the gradual enlightenment of their minds, came to their Master, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." And Jesus, ever ready to promote their spiritual advancement, immediately complied. In doing this, he knew they had sins to be pardoned, and that they should be taught to seek the Divine mercy; that they were opposed by powerful and malignant spirits, and needed protection from the evil one; that they were surrounded by temptations, and ought to ask deliverance from their power; and that they required daily bread, for which they should pray to their heavenly Father. Yet, in such circumstances, pressed by so many urgent personal necessities, how did Jesus teach his disciples to address a throne of grace? There were, in his judgment, acknowledgments and supplications which had precedence of



all these requests: he accordingly taught them first to recognise the paternal character of the great Jehovah, and the universal brotherhood of mankind. Hence the first aspiration which we are taught to send to heaven is, "OUR FATHER, which art in heaven." What, then, is the first petition? Having thus, as one of a family, addressed ourselves to our heavenly Father, do we pass to a detail of our individual necessities? On the contrary, we are first taught to supplicate an extension of the Divine honour,—“Hallowed be thy name:” the fact, that the first petition which we are taught to offer to heaven respects the Divine honour and glory, is pregnant with the most important teaching. But what is the next supplication? It is of very analogous import: “Thy kingdom come.” So that the extension of the Redeemer’s kingdom in the earth is next to engage our sympathy and our prayer. Nor are we permitted, under this Divine teaching, to attend even to our daily bread, until we have prayed for the extension of the Divine glory, the establishment of Christ’s kingdom, and for such a glorious prevalence of the redeeming power of Christ as shall subjugate the whole human race to his dominion, and render a universal obedience to his will as perfect in earth as it is in heaven. Nor is it until we have thus entered into the purposes of grace, and prayed for their full and glorious accomplishment, that we are taught to pray for pardon, protection against spiritual evil, or even for daily bread.

And does not our highest reason warrant and confirm the propriety of this? Loyalty has ever been regarded as an essential virtue. Yet what sovereign holds so indefeasible and extensive a right to rule a nation as Christ has to the sovereignty of mankind? This is, in fact, the culminating point of redemption: this glorious extension of the kingdom of Christ over all our race involves the defeat of satanic aggression, the salvation of man, the destruction of sin. My brethren, let us keep these objects before our minds, as the great end of our preaching. It is right and proper that we labour to obtain information. It is necessary that we study and pray, so as to be able to use our acquirements effectively. But do not let us be satisfied with merely delivering a regular, well-digested discourse. Every thing of this kind must be regarded only as the means to an end. If more than this, the whole institution is perverted, and our labour is lost. Our object is not self-gratification, human applause, or the attainment of any conventional *status*: we labour for souls,—for the honour of Christ, the defeat of Satan, the abolition of sin. Let us keep our grand

object distinctly in view, and never be diverted from it by minor considerations.

From the object of preaching, we turn to a consideration of its nature. What is it? Wherein does its true character consist? We might say, generally, that preaching is the delivery of a discourse for the communication of Divine truth, and the promotion of religion among men. And such we have found it in all ages of the world. Enoch and Noah, in antediluvian times; Moses, Aaron, Ezra, and the prophets, under the Mosaic economy; and Jesus Christ and his apostles, in gospel days, thus preached. But the question returns, What is the precise nature and character of that preaching to which we are called?

Perhaps no reply can be given more terse, distinct, and complete than that short statement of the great apostle:—"He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." (1 Cor. xiv. 3.) Let us briefly explain and apply these terms. The word rendered "edification" signifies, "to make or build a house." It is precisely the same word as occurs in this Epistle, iii. 9, where the clause is rendered, "Ye are God's building." And again, in Eph. ii. 21, "In whom all the *building* fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Dr. Adam Clarke has given an elaborate exposition of this text in his celebrated sermon on "The Christian Prophet and his Work:" our reference to the subject must be brief.

This first element of a preacher's work, then, implies the reconstruction of the ruined fabric of human piety. When originally created, man was holy, and blessed with intimate communion with God. All this dignity and happiness was destroyed by sin. The redeeming work of Christ has made every provision for a new and more glorious reconstruction. Preaching is the great appointed means by which the work is to be effected. For, as Dr. Clarke beautifully observes, "though the human soul be in a state of ruin, and the form and comeliness of the building be passed away; yet, not one of the original materials is lost, and, to follow the metaphor, the stones and timbers are still in existence; but they are displaced and disjointed; and none but the Divine Architect can revive these out of the rubbish, and restore the form and comeliness of the edifice." In order to this, we must begin with Christ. Other foundation can no man lay than is laid already—Christ crucified. But on this foundation the old ruins are to be raised up, and moulded according to the mind of Christ, until



we are complete in him. But it may be asked, "Can preaching effect this superhuman work?" St. Paul does not say so; and God forbid that any of us should think so! The work is of God. Divine influence alone can restore the ruined holiness of man. What, then, is the office of the preacher? It is this: "He *speaketh unto men* to edification." That is the object, end, and tendency of his communications. He points out the ruin, he exhibits the glorious model, he calls attention to the willingness and the ability of the Sovereign Saviour. To "speak unto edification," therefore, is, so to speak, as to lead sinners to the true foundation, even Christ Jesus; and on that safe and sure base to build up the pardoned soul in the knowledge, the love, and the image of God.

But preaching also includes "speaking unto exhortation." And here, with great diffidence, I differ from the learned author of "The Christian Prophet and his Work," on a point of philology. Dr. Clarke says of this term, "From its component parts, *παρά*, 'near to,' and *καλέω*, 'I call,' we may learn, that it implies calling the soul near to God." Now this appears to be critically unwarrantable, if, indeed, it is not quite fanciful. It is true that this is the derivation of the term; but, then, where do we find, in these component parts, any reference to God? The term comes from *παρακαλέω*, (*parakaleo*), and the meaning given to this term by the best authorities is, "I call beside, or near; send for, summon, beg, entreat, beseech, exhort, admonish." This sense, it will be immediately perceived, points out a very important characteristic of preaching. We are to place ourselves in proximity to sinful men. Like our Master who came to seek and to save that which was lost, we are to *draw near* to those who need mercy. And then we are to call upon them in the language of earnest entreaty, fervent exhortation, and godly admonition. In another, and perhaps a still more pointed, application of the term, we are to *draw near* to those whom we address, not only locally, but also in respect of their views, feelings, and state of mind. We are to study their character, their views and prejudices, their temptations and sins, their weakness and want; and from thus entering into their circumstances, and as far as possible realizing their condition, we are to call upon them to forsake sin and live to God.

But preaching also includes the communication of consolation: "he *speaketh unto comfort*." I trust to be forgiven if I err on this point; but I have feared, that modern preaching generally is more at fault in this respect than in any other. Hear preaching generally; and you may be deeply impressed



with the speaker's powers of mind ; you may be enchanted by his eloquence, astonished by his argumentation, or captivated by the chasteness of his manner and the elegance of his diction. But how seldom do you leave a place of worship with your mind filled with the idea of the preacher's love for souls, his compassion for sinners, and sympathy and lamentation over those who are erring and out of the way ! And yet is not this the very spirit of a gospel preacher ? Was not this the ruling element in the character of our great Master ?

"Pity drew him from above,  
To make his mercy known."

And we shall always labour most successfully when we feel most deeply the sentiment expressed by our poet :—

"The love of Christ doth me constrain  
To seek the wandering souls of men ;  
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,  
And snatch them from the gaping grave."

We should, therefore, labour to attain the mind that was in Christ, that we may imbibe his spirit, and be thus prepared to evince a corresponding manner and deportment.

There is, however, no doubt that more than this is implied in this term. The ministration of consolation to penitent sinners, and to believers in Christ who are passing through fiery trials or fierce temptations, is an important portion of a preacher's duty. The genius and spirit of the gospel message is the proclamation of glad tidings—the good news of salvation. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." We cannot, therefore, too earnestly offer a full, a free, and a present salvation to penitent sinners. We cannot too urgently present the consolations of Christ to his tried and tempted followers.

If we are guided by the teaching of this brief but comprehensive portion of scripture, we shall not, I think, greatly mistake the nature of our work :—Speaking to men unto edification, exhortation, and comfort ;—leading them in penitence and prayer to a crucified Saviour, for pardoning mercy and renewing grace ;—a raising up, through the influence of the Divine Spirit, the new man in righteousness and true holiness ;—placing ourselves by their side, and calling, urging, and exhorting them to diligence and devotedness in this holy work ;—and, at the same time, by a careful study of the precious promises, and an apprehension of Divine grace, ministering consolation and comfort to the mourners in Zion.

But you know, my brethren, that we have to encounter many

and serious difficulties in the prosecution of this work. Two or three of those causes of trial shall be briefly noticed.

Reference may be made, in the first instance, to the difficulties presented to the proper prosecution of our work, by the fluctuations of our religious feelings, and by our temporal circumstances. In common with all our Christian brethren, we have to "endure hardness as good soldiers;" and are, consequently, not unfrequently in "heaviness through manifold temptations;" and, although "not distressed, in despair, or destroyed," we are often "troubled, perplexed, and cast down." This is not all: we are not only, with others, subject to these religious exercises; we are equally exposed to temporal difficulties. Passing through a world in which, as a rule, "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," we have to meet disappointment, trial, adversity, and bereavement. Notwithstanding these, we have to hold on our way, preaching the word of life. And where is the local preacher who has not felt his spirit crushed, his mind almost distracted under the pressure of these afflictions? To fix the mind on meditation, to grasp the sense and substance of a portion of Divine truth, and bring it out for the edification and comfort of others, have often seemed almost impossible, when the preacher himself has felt the waters go over his head, the iron enter into his soul.

The local preacher has also, not unfrequently, great difficulty in his work. He will sometimes see a most inviting portion of scripture, full of importance, rich in practical meaning, every way adapted to be useful as the subject of a discourse; and yet, although the mind is most prayerfully and earnestly devoted to the text, it does not open as he expected, nor can thought or effort elicit from it the expected material. At another time,—when a sermon seems to be satisfactorily prepared, and every thing promises comfort and usefulness,—something occurs in the mind, or in circumstances of the time, by which the delivery is rendered apparently ineffectual and unsatisfactory. Or if the mind appears to have fully apprehended the scope of a text, the matter has been satisfactorily arranged, and delivered with clearness, comfort, and a measure of power,—in meditating on the discourse afterwards, there seems reason to fear that, in manner, arrangement, and style, the love of souls, and a single-minded effort to win them to Christ, has been, if not lost sight of, by no means made as prominent and pervading as ought to have been the case.

Then, in respect of other local preachers, the want of needful information and of general knowledge is most painfully felt,

suitable books are beyond their means of purchase, and in fact are to them unknown. Means of friendly assistance and guidance may, indeed, be within their reach, and might be obtained; but how does the diffident and embarrassed novice know that? I question whether any situation is more painfully embarrassing than that of a young local preacher endeavouring to qualify himself for his arduous duties. Often does he fear to ask advice or information, lest it should be regarded as offensive or intrusive. Were this case fairly and kindly considered, it is very probable that intelligent and experienced members of society in our several circuits would evince a generous consideration towards young local preachers, and would favour them with assistance of the most important kind, in loans of books and in other respects, which might be most efficiently communicated, with little sacrifice or cost to the donors.

Want of time, with many members of our body, is felt as much as want of books. When the man has to labour hard for ten, twelve, or fourteen hours in the day, the demand on the physical system is such, that few can sit down and bring their mental energies to bear on sacred studies. There are indeed some, whose intellectual powers are of such a character, that the surest means of unbending is, to bend the contrary way; and who, after a day of great secular labour and anxiety,—instead of requiring an hour or two of easy chat or frivolous amusement,—feel all the better for the employment of the same space of time in searching inquiry into some scriptural subject, or in the prayerful composition of a religious discourse. I do not think all minds possess this power; but I am strongly inclined to believe, that if we were more generally to habituate ourselves to such an exercise, we should to a far greater extent be able to benefit ourselves and others.

I have now to speak of the encouragements which our Heavenly Father has mercifully appointed to aid and stimulate us in our work. For it must not be forgotten, that, amid all the difficulty and trials of our arduous duties, we have, nevertheless, important encouragements to cheer us.

The first that I shall mention is one of the most important that can be adduced. I, of course, allude to the explicit and positive promise of the personal presence of our Sovereign Saviour with us, in all our difficulty, trial, and toil. I am fully sensible that the promise to which I allude (Matt. xxviii. 20) is in a special and peculiar sense applicable to ministers who are called to leave all their worldly pursuits, and to devote their undivided attention to the service of the church. But this does



not deprive us of our legitimate interest in the high and holy consolation which it affords. What is the injunction and command to which this Divine word of promise is attached? "Go ye therefore, and disciple (μαθητεύσατε) all nations.....teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Now to the same extent as this command is laid on us, we are clearly interested in the promise. And it most certainly extends to all the difficulty, anxiety, and exertion necessary for the performance of our duty. To this extent we are clearly entitled to ask and receive the presence and aid of our gracious Redeemer. My brethren, think of this. In all your complicated trials and exertions, remember that you are really entitled, not merely to aid, protection, and guidance, but actually to the immediate presence of Christ: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Yes, although our secular engagements may draw largely on our time and strength, although our means of intellectual improvement and even of biblical knowledge are exceedingly limited, notwithstanding our spirits often faint under a sense of our weakness and of the magnitude of our work, let us bear in mind that the Fountain of wisdom and power is ever with us. We may ask of him and obtain grace, trust in him and increase in wisdom, believe in him and gloriously realise the assurance that, "as our days, so our strength shall be." How full of comfort is this pleasant thought,—Our Saviour himself is with us! He who lived in our world, descended into all the depth of human infirmity, and who is, even now in his glory, one with us in our common nature, and who is likewise "God over all blessed for ever,"—He, the glorified and Sovereign Lord Jesus, is with us in all our weakness, and toil, and want. My brethren, with this glorious promise, will you ever sink under discouragement again?

Another gracious encouragement adapted to console and cheer us on our course is the assurance we have, that our success is in perfect accordance with the Divine will and desire. In our sacred vocation we are not struggling to accomplish a work of our own. We go forth, it is true, in great weakness to sow the seed of life eternal; but the message we so feebly deliver is the result of the deepest and wisest counsels of the Eternal Mind. All miracles, all prophecy, all the unknown wonders of the incarnation, and of the redeeming scheme, are involved in our proclamation of mercy. We go and speak in plain and simple language to a few of our fellow-sinners; but, wherever we go, we bear with us the positive assurance that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

The volition of the Divine Mind, in this instance, must not be construed as meaning *a mere allowance*, (as is probably too often done,) but rather a strong, earnest, and intense desire. It may be necessary for our encouragement to dwell for a moment on this thought. The Calvinistic controversy has perhaps thrown us so much on the defensive in respect of the doctrines of general redemption, that it is to be feared, in meeting the advocates of election and virtual reprobation, we have often been content to take the term "willeth," in this and other texts, in its lowest sense, as indicating little more than mere allowance.

We shall have other views, if we carefully study the general teaching of the New Testament. Take, as an instance, the discourse of our blessed Lord to the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees, recorded in the early part of Luke xv.: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." The same truth is again asserted by the parable of the woman who lost a piece of silver, the account of which closes with the statement, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." This portion of holy writ has been frequently used for the purpose of showing the sympathy of angelic minds with the process of human redemption, and their joy over the conversion of souls. All this may be just: but nothing can be more certain than that this is by no means the prime object of the Saviour's discourse. The friends of the man who had found his lost sheep, and the neighbours of the woman who had recovered the piece of silver, are not the principal parties who rejoice. The man and the woman are the persons whose joy is set before us, as so full, deep, and intense, that it cannot be confined to their own breasts. That of their neighbours, in fact, arises out of this, and is but an echo of it. So then it is the joy and exultation of God over the recovery of ruined man, that is the subject of our Saviour's discourse. He—and O, how deeply expressive are these words!—He "sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied."

Yes, my brethren; this is not the flight of an excited imagination, but a very grave and weighty truth,—that the Lord delighteth to be gracious, that his heart is set on the success of

our efforts, that the weakest attempt to turn away a sinner from his wickedness, and to bring him to God, is sure to receive the blessing and aid of our Sovereign Saviour. All heaven is with us,—

“The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost  
Is ready, with their shining host;  
All heaven is ready to resound,  
‘The dead’s alive, the lost is found!’”

Let us then cheerfully pursue our way, through evil report and good report, assured that, if faithful to our calling, we shall not run in vain, or labour in vain.

Another ground of encouragement may be cited. It has been already shown, that this strong desire for the salvation of souls is in perfect accordance with the mind of Christ. What, then, is the evident consequence of this? The more faithful, and diligent, and holy we are in our individual experience, the better we are prepared to prosecute our evangelical work. When, therefore, we find our difficulties multiply, and our trials increase, we shall not act unwisely if we carefully and jealously watch our inward thoughts and feelings, and ascertain whether we are the subjects of any spiritual declension; as undoubtedly any measure of falling away is likely to produce similar results.

The issue therefore is, that the most essential ability to perform our work efficiently, arises out of our individual spiritual prosperity. Whatever difficulties may beset our progress, we cannot allege that our preaching duties come into collision with our growth in grace. On the contrary, our preaching duties form so many motives to spiritual progress. Our rising up into the mind that was in Christ, forms the strength and happiness of our course of public action.

Our work, then, is one of unspeakable blessedness. It brings us into immediate contact with the Divine Will, associates us with all the operations of grace, and gives us a personal interest in all the progress of the kingdom of Christ. Not only ought we therefore to labour on diligently, devotedly, patiently, and punctually in all our appointments; but we ought also to do this joyfully, seeing that our Divine Master has thought us worthy to be in any measure employed in his holy service.

But not only have we to pursue our way under this happy consciousness, we have also positive and elevating causes of joy. Which of us have piously and zealously pursued our course of labour, for any long season, without knowing that our word has been blessed to the salvation of some soul? We cannot indeed know much of the success of our efforts in this respect. Nor



is it perhaps desirable that we should. But there does come, now and then, before us, clear and distinct proof that the Lord has not sent us on a warfare at our own charge ; and that here a soul is quickened and blessed, and there a poor sinner is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, by our instrumentality. When a case of this kind occurs, who can describe the peculiar and ecstatic bliss which it communicates ? I freely confess I know of nothing that can approach it in high, holy, spiritual feeling. Yes, my brethren, many of you have in the experience of this joy rapturously sung,—

“Tis worth living for this, to administer bliss  
And salvation in Jesus's name.”

But this happiness, great as it is, is far from being the crowning enjoyment of our cup. Ours at present is a course of labour, and toil, and painful exercise ; but this is not always to continue. Our career will close, and that ere long. Has it not often occurred to us, that our names, after a very few years, rise rapidly on the chronologically arranged list of our several Plans ? From being at the bottom *on trial*, we gradually ascend, until we are placed at, or near, the top. What does this indicate ? Why, that we are speedily hastening to our final destiny ; that our fellow-labourers have passed away, and that we are quickly approaching our heavenly rest. How, then, does our course of duty appear to us in the light of eternity, and in the prospect of the full fruition of God ? O, my brethren, here its true blessedness is seen. We can easily turn to other objects, engagements, and pursuits, which appeared to be of consequence in their day, but which, when regarded in connexion with the future and unseen world, dwindle down into insignificance, and seem of no account. It is not so in respect of our efforts to preach the gospel. No ! This stands out in all its grandeur, importance, and vital interest, as we connect our present with our future being. In the prospect of eternity, what is our toil or trial ? what, our difficulty and danger ? Glowing effusions of gratitude to God for having called us to the work, and for having given us any measure of success in it, swallow up every other thought ; and we felicitate ourselves with the crowning word of grace : “They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” Can any two thoughts be found more full of comfort and blessing to persons circumstanced as we are, than those given in these few words ? “*They rest from their labours,*” secular and spiritual ; from

all their varied and harassing course of toil, they rest. Yes, they rest in Christ. Cheered by the word of their Prince and Saviour, they held on their way, they endured unto the end. His gracious declaration, "Where I am, there shall my servants be also," has sustained them, and urged them on; and now it is gloriously realised. But this is not all. "Their works do follow them." Perhaps on entering into glory, they are gratified by the sight of those to whose souls their word was made a blessing on earth; and from time to time they see others received into that region of glory, who on earth were the happy subjects of their teaching, toil, and care, and who are now their joy, and crown of rejoicing.

Let us then rightly estimate our position and course of duty, and diligently devote ourselves to its performance. Never let us allow the enemy to beguile us into the idea, that we are to astonish our hearers by something wonderful, or charm them by what is very elegant. Do not seek difficult or abstruse portions of holy scripture for texts; and especially let me advise you to avoid discussing unfulfilled prophecy. The learning, study, and mental energy which have been spent in this direction, and which have resulted in little beyond vain speculation, dogmatism, and error, might, if better employed, have conferred lasting benefits on the church and on the world.

Above all, let us never sink in any degree into that error which is the essence of Popery; namely, that the church is made for the preachers, instead of preachers being made for the church. Our only elevation consists in pious, persevering, devoted labour. This was our Master's standard: "Let him that is greatest among you, be servant of all." Do any of you feel consciously possessed of more mental power or ability than your brethren? Beware lest you be tempted, for this reason, to expect more deference, and to feel justified, from the absence of it, in being offended. No greater mistake than this can be made. Whence did you obtain this power, and who bestowed it? Dream not that it was made yours for your elevation and dignity. For nothing of the kind was it imparted. It was deposited with you for the use, the honour, and the glory of your Divine Master. It was given, not that you should have more deference and honour paid you, but that you should do more, and suffer more, in your Master's service.

In truth, my brethren, we are partakers of a high and holy calling; and have need to guard ourselves on every side, lest the vessel that God has called into his service be in any measure marred by our error, neglect, or unfaithfulness. Let

us then fully recognise the spiritual and very important character of our work ; and while, oppressed with the magnitude of our duty and its pressing obligations, we ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" let us remember that our sufficiency is of God, and that we must go to him continually, and depend on him alone, for wisdom and power.

Yet while doing this, we must not forget subsidiary means of help. We have to do with man. He is the object of our solicitude. We aim at his salvation. We should obtain a good knowledge of human nature, and devote ourselves to the inquiry with earnest and persevering effort. Man, in the various inflexions of his history,—man, in the nature and character of his mind,—man, as a subject of temptation and grace, should be the object of our research.

Then, as far as our means extend, we should know the wonderful works of God by which we are surrounded, the laws of their being, and the gracious appliances by which the great Creator has made all things subservient to our good. The dispensations of Divine Providence in the government of man, in civil society, and in relation to the progress of the church, also furnish interesting matter for research.

All these may profitably, as we have opportunity, engage our attention ; and our future discourses will touch on some of them. But there is one great source of instruction to which we must attach primary and supreme importance :—The Bible must be our text-book, and our guide. Here we have set before us God's own account of our whole case. To this sure and certain word of prophecy, then, we shall do well to take heed. Our first and main effort in our future Lectures will therefore be, to show the paramount importance of these sacred records, and to elicit the substance of their teaching on the grand subject of man's salvation. Other collateral matters, connected with our work, will also be carefully noted. But all this will be done in complete deference to the teaching of the word of truth. Let us then, my brethren, that we may derive the largest amount of good from this humble attempt, more than ever make ourselves acquainted with the words of eternal life.

Commending you to God and to the word of his grace, and praying that you may abound yet more and more in all the fruits of the Spirit, and in all successful efforts to save souls from death, I bring the present address to a close.



## LECTURE II.

### THE GENUINENESS, AUTHENTICITY, AND INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES; AND THEIR AUTHORITY AND SUFFICIENCY AS A RULE OF FAITH.

THE proper Province of Reason in respect of Divine Revelation—WHAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND BY A DIVINE REVELATION—Possibility of Revelation—Necessity of Revelation—Proofs of this in Man's Ignorance of himself and of God—Consequent Duty of examining the Claims of the sacred Books to Divine Inspiration—THEIR GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY CONSIDERED—The Case of the Old Testament—External and internal Proof of Old-Testament Genuineness and Verity—External Proof of the Genuineness and Authenticity of New-Testament Books—Their internal Evidence—CLAIM OF HOLY SCRIPTURE TO BE AN INSPIRED REVELATION OF THE WILL OF GOD—What implied in such Inspiration—Proper Evidence of this—Miracles one Class of Proof—Miracles wrought by Moses—Perfection of this kind of Evidence—Miracles of the New Testament—Those of Christ and his Apostles—The complete Evidence thus afforded—Special Importance of the Miracle of the Resurrection of Christ—The perfect Completeness of its Proof—The Evidence of Prophecy considered—General Observations—The Prophecies respecting the Posterity of Abraham—Predictions respecting the Hebrews—Those concerning Ishmael and his Posterity—Wonderfully fulfilled, and replete with important Proofs of the Inspiration of Holy Writ—Prophecies concerning Gentile Nations—Tyre—The four Monarchies of Daniel's Prophecies—Predictions respecting the Messiah—The prophetic Communications of Christ and his Apostles—The Reasonableness and Purity of the Precepts of holy Scripture—The Harmony found to pervade the whole Range of the Books of the Old and the New Testament, and their wonderful Preservation, constitute further Proof of their Inspiration—The Sufficiency and Authority of the Bible as a Rule of Faith and Morals—Personal Evidence—Conclusion.

AT the close of my last address I intimated that the Bible would form the subject of several of the succeeding Lectures. This being the case, we cannot more suitably or profitably enter upon this task, than by inquiring into the character which the sacred scriptures are entitled to hold: Whether, in fact, the books composing the Old and New Testaments were written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, truly narrate the events they profess to detail, and are indeed the direct result of a plenary Divine inspiration operating on, guiding, and teaching the writers as they composed them; and, further, whether these genuine, authentic, and inspired books afford us a sure and sufficient guide in all matters of faith and practice. A solution

of these questions will engage our attention in the present discourses.

In entering upon this investigation, we have first to decide to what extent this inquiry is to proceed; or, in other words, how far it is right and proper to subject the professed revelation of the truth of God to the reason of man. I will at once freely but briefly state my views on this difficult and disputable point. I do not think it competent to any man to discuss, or to decide on, the reasonableness of any doctrine, law, or precept of holy scripture. I fully hold that we are not at liberty to canvass the contents of the inspired volume in detail, and to accept one part because it accords with our reason and judgment, and to reject another part because it does not. I regard this course as altogether inadmissible. But, then, I as strenuously contend, that the claims of the Bible to be a Divine revelation are fully submitted to our inquiry, reason, and judgment.

We are not bound to receive, on the *dictum* of man, any written records as divinely revealed. On the contrary, we are encouraged, are in fact enjoined, to examine and search the scriptures, and by a careful and diligent scrutiny to satisfy ourselves whether or not they are, what they profess to be, a revelation of the Divine Will to mankind. But if, after this candid and careful inquiry, we feel assured that this claim is sustained, that the Bible is indeed the word of God; then it becomes our duty to study, believe, and obey. Then, if we find matters which we do not relish, or depths we cannot fathom, our intellectual powers must submit to be taught, or, if need be, remain ignorant of modes and means, implicitly receiving the declared fact, or truth, on the authority of God. In a word, we are at liberty freely to investigate the proofs which attest the Bible to be a Divine revelation. But if fully convinced that it is really so, then it becomes our simple duty to receive it as the truth of God, cheered by the consolatory reflection that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.

It may be necessary here to state explicitly what we understand by "Divine revelation." By this phrase we mean such a discovery, to the mind of man, of Divine and spiritual things as he could not possibly acquire by the exercise of his unassisted reason; or such further information on subjects but partially known to human reason, as the unaided intellect of man would not otherwise have apprehended. I will give an instance of each class. The moral nature of God is a subject of which the human intellect, alone and unaided, can know

nothing. We may read his power, wisdom, and immensity in the works of nature: but where can we find information respecting his holiness, truth, mercy, and love? It is from revelation alone that a knowledge of these glorious attributes can be obtained. Again: we may by nature know something of man's relation to God. From his greatness and power, and our weakness and continually-recurring wants, we might fairly infer our dependence on him; and in a similar manner other elements of information might be obtained. But all this would fall far short of a satisfactory knowledge of the subject, either in extent, or in regard to certainty. By the light of revelation, however, the whole case stands before us, and we know, to the fullest extent, our relation to our Maker, and how, in all the varied aspects of our character, we are regarded by him.

The Bible comes to us professing to be a Divine revelation. But it has been asked, "Is this possible? Can it be, that the Eternal Jehovah, exalted as he is in majesty and dominion, has stooped to make direct communications of his will to man? and that man, in all his earthliness and depravity, can apprehend, recognise, and realise these communications from heaven?" We need not be long detained on this point. Admitting the existence of an eternal, almighty, and all-wise God, and the intellectual and moral nature of man, it is difficult to conceive how the possibility of this revelation can be denied or doubted. Surely he who made the mind of man capable of receiving information and impressions through the medium of all the senses, could devise means of reaching us by direct revelation. This is so obvious, that few have gone so far as to deny its possibility. And therefore sceptics generally have retreated a step, and contented themselves with urging the extreme improbability, that the eternal and exalted God should manifest his mind to such a worm of earth as man. Yet, if we take a broad view of our race, in all places and ages of the world, we find the universal sense of mankind embodied in the probability—I might have more properly said, in *the certainty*—of such a revelation. Look where you will, scrutinise as closely as you please, you will find every where, in all ages, that wherever man has had any knowledge or belief of a Deity, true or false, he has recognised the communication of knowledge and influence from that Deity to man.

This is a very striking fact, and indicates the general sense of mankind. The darkest and most besotted Heathen, the most polished and elevated polytheists, have all believed in a



Divine revelation, not only as a probability, but as a fact. All classes of character, and all grades of intellect, have spoken of the manner and modes in which Divine revelations have been supposed to be made. There were prophets and soothsayers among all the nations of antiquity. The most renowned Heathen legislators and teachers propounded their several codes and schemes of teaching under an avowal of Divine sanction. Lycurgus, Pythagoras, Solon, Socrates, Numa, and others, did so: all which proves that unenlightened men generally regarded revelations from God to man as very probable.

But we may carry the argument farther than this, and insist on it, that not only is a Divine revelation possible and exceedingly probable, but that it is in the fullest sense of the term *necessary*.

This may appear a strong and bold assertion. But let the case be fairly examined. Look at man, with all his elevated capacities and powers, his intelligence, duty, and destiny; and let me ask, Are there not some attainments which he *ought* to possess, which can be secured only by the aid of revelation; some elements of knowledge necessary to be known, and which revelation alone can communicate? I refer, as the first instance of this kind, to the origin and common paternity of mankind. Surely, a creature possessing such elevated powers as man does, ought to know at least thus much of himself. But what has he ever known on this subject, even in the most civilised and cultivated countries, in the absence of Divine revelation? The natives of the East Indies boast an immense antiquity, with extensive civilisation and science. What did they know of the origin of mankind? They taught that man was formed from different parts of the body of the Creator;—that the *Brahmans* sprung from his mouth, and that the whole tribe was in consequence the constituted teachers of the world;—that the second or *Kshetriya* tribe, the warrior caste of the Hindus, have sprung from the breast or arm of Brahma;—that the *Vaisya* or third caste comprised all merchants and mercantile men, and their original was taken from the Creator's thigh. The fourth is the *Shudra*, which sprang from Brahma's foot; and of this class are all artificers, artisans, artists, and husbandmen. This is the amount of knowledge which the millions of India possessed respecting the origin of mankind.

But perhaps it will be said, "This is oriental fable—the philosophy of the classic nations of the West knew better." Let us then ask, How much wiser was the western world after it had been enlightened by intercourse with Assyria, Babylon,

and Persia, and when it ultimately possessed all the learning of Egypt, Greece, and Rome? We have the means of showing. Diodorus the Sicilian lived in the days of Augustus, and devoted his life to the compilation of an universal history. To obtain materials for this great work, he travelled over a large part of Europe and Asia, and resided for a considerable period at Rome. After thirty years of labour for this purpose, he designedly entered on a discussion concerning the origin of mankind: and what is the substance of his statement? "That moisture generates creatures from heat as from a seminal principle;"—That, on account of the fertile nature of the soil, of the heat, and of the purity of the waters of the Nile, Egypt possessed this generating power in a pre-eminent degree. Hence the learned historian concludes, "Whence it is manifest, that in the beginning of the world, through the fertility of the soil, the first men were formed in Egypt;"\* where, it is presumed, they crept like frogs from the warmed and vivified mud on the banks of the Nile. Is this information satisfactory respecting the origin of mankind? Yet men destitute of revelation never had better. And it will be seen that all these notions are as misleading as they are defective. By giving mankind no common origin, they isolate man from man, separate the human family into sections, and utterly conceal the most interesting and peculiar feature of our nature,—the universal brotherhood of mankind.

Without revelation, man has always been ignorant of God. If any knowledge is really essential to human well-being, this must of necessity be its principal element. Yet, does not the whole history of the Heathen world attest the absence of all sound acquaintance with this vitally important subject? Universal idolatry proves, that the men who had no revelation of the Divine Will were soon involved in the deepest ignorance of his nature and worship. "Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened;" they accordingly "changed the truth of God into a lie," and ascribed to every part of nature the attributes of the eternal Deity.

But it is commonly alleged, that, although the vast mass of the Heathen world were to a great extent ignorant of God, the initiated and the philosophers were possessed of accurate knowledge on this subject. The assertion has been often made; but it is groundless. The Mysteries did not teach the unity and

\* DIODORUS SICULUS, lib. i. chap. 1.

perfections of God, but rather supported and sustained, by a vast range of artistic appliances, the superstitions of the prevailing mythology. And which of the philosophers held just and elevated views of the Divine Nature? That we find in writings of the sages of Greece and Rome some expressions bearing on this subject, which indicate an approach to propriety, is not denied. But that any of these bore a consistent and influential testimony to the truth in this respect, has not been, and cannot be, proved. Did Socrates, in his high-minded and self-devoted conscientiousness, impugn the polytheism of Greece? Or did Cicero, who perhaps possessed more favourable opportunities for acquiring this knowledge than any other Heathen, and who devoted the utmost energies of his cultivated and mighty mind to the investigation of the subject,—did he elicit any tolerable acquaintance with the nature and attributes of Deity? So far from it, he does not even venture to hazard an opinion on the subject. Having given, in one of his famous treatises, the conflicting sentiments of the various philosophical sects; not one of which, be it observed, held any sound or enlightened views of this important doctrine; he leaves this collision of hypothesis and speculation in all its native doubt and darkness.

Again: destitute of revelation, man has always been ignorant of the means by which the Divine favour might be obtained, and the real happiness of man be secured.

Man is acknowledged to be a subject of the Divine government, and amenable to Divine laws. The common conviction of man has always evinced this; and the fact already cited may be referred to in proof, namely, that almost all eminent legislators professed to act under Divine authority, in order to secure a better reception for their codes of law. But, notwithstanding this current opinion, all these claims were mere pretences. The Heathen world had no authorised knowledge of the Divine Will. Their theology rose no higher than legendary tales; their morals were entirely speculation; and their views of a future state, and of final rewards and punishments, were a perfect chaos of contradiction and confusion.

A Divine revelation being thus shown to be not only possible and probable, but actually necessary, we have in the next place to investigate those books which have come down to us, professing to contain an authorised communication of the will of God to mankind, and to form a serious and deliberate opinion of the validity of these claims.

In the prosecution of this inquiry, it becomes our first duty



to satisfy ourselves as to the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred books. The meaning of these terms must be distinctly and fully understood. A book, to be *genuine*, must have been written by the person whose name it bears as the author. And this has no reference to the truth of its contents. So that a book may be *genuine*, like one of Sir Walter Scott's novels, although it is mostly or wholly filled with imaginary or legendary tales. Whilst, on the other hand, a book, to be *authentic*, must contain a statement of truth; and a book may possess this character, although it be placed before the world under a feigned or false name. "Lord Anson's Voyage round the World," for instance, is an *authentic* book, since it contains a truthful statement of events, although it was not written by the Rev. Richard Walter, whose name is printed on the title-page as the author, but by Benjamin Robins: it is, therefore, *not genuine*. But as it cannot be supposed that God would convey his inspired truth to mankind through any medium contaminated with falsehood, it will be requisite, before we enter on a consideration of their inspired character, to consider the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred books.

It may be necessary here to observe, that these books are divided into two classes or sections; the first being written in Hebrew, and called the Old Testament; the other written in Greek, and termed the New Testament. These terms are derived from the Latin version of 2 Cor. iii. 6, 14; in which the Greek words, ἡ Παλαιὰ Διαθήκη, and ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη, are by the old Latin translators rendered *Antiquum (vel Vetus) Testamentum*, and *Novum Testamentum*; instead of *Antiquum Fœdus* and *Novum Fœdus*, "the Old and New Covenant," which would have strictly accorded with the original. But our translators, following the Latin, have led to the general adoption of these names as designations for scriptures written respectively in Hebrew and Greek.

In speaking of the genuineness and authenticity of these books, we have to consider two classes of evidence or proofs: First, that which arises from the testimony of contemporary witnesses, having a knowledge of the facts and a disposition to state the truth, and which is denominated "external evidence:"—and, Secondly, that which arises from the matter, the construction, the diction, manner, and style of the several works: this is called "internal evidence."

I. First, then, with regard to the "external evidence." As the question respecting the authorship and truthful statements of a book is one of historical fact, which can only be decided by

evidence, we will give a sufficient abstract of this kind of proof, to attest the validity of holy scripture.

We will first consider the case of the Old-Testament books. I give the division of these which is found in our Bibles. The Old Testament consists of thirty-nine books : Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, first and second of Samuel, first and second of Kings, first and second of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. It will be necessary to consider the information we possess respecting the genuineness and authenticity of these several works. In the prosecution of this inquiry, we must take into account the peculiar antiquity and isolated position of the Hebrew people, for whose immediate use these books were produced ; and in consequence of which it is impossible to have the same collateral proof respecting the authorship of any of them, which might be fairly expected if the nations held that intercourse with each other which is now the practice in modern Europe. It is, however, equally certain, that this peculiar character of isolation renders the evidence furnished by the Hebrews themselves all the stronger.

We observe, then, that these books were written, published, and received by contemporary Hebrews as religious and inspired books. Take the case of Moses, who is the alleged author of the first five books. They contain an account of the creation, of the origin of the primitive nations, of patriarchal history, of the exodus, with the establishment of the Hebrew ecclesiastical economy, and the history of the Hebrews down to the time of his death. These books contain assertions that they were written by Moses. The Books of Joshua and Judges follow, and clearly refer to the works of Moses. And, without naming all these sacred writings in detail, it is clear to any candid observer, that they form one connected chain. Without the Books of Moses, the Books of Joshua and Judges could not have been written and received : Of the Books of Kings, the Chronicles, and even the Prophets, different as are their scope and object, the same may be said.

But it is capable of undoubted proof that, prior to the birth of Christ, the Jewish nation fully believed in the verity of these sacred records. Before we proceed to this proof, let me ask, If the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, and does not contain a record of facts, when could the Hebrew people have

been persuaded to receive it? You will observe that these books exhibit the origin of the civil and religious institutions which obtained among them, and that these must have had a beginning. If that was not in the Wilderness of Sinai, as Moses relates, when and where was it? Can you conceive the possibility of any one persuading a whole generation of men to believe, that their fathers had for hundreds of years credited certain statements, and practised numerous rites, when nothing of the kind had ever been heard of before? If the books of Moses are not valid, then the Hebrews, up to a certain point of their history, must, like every other people, have had national legends, religious rites, and traditions of their origin and history of a different kind. How could these have been displaced, and the Mosaic account have been superinduced? When could our ancestors, or ourselves, have been persuaded that the Saxon Invasion and Norman Conquest do not belong to our history; but that we had a Mahommedan extraction, and must henceforth believe and live like Mahommedans? There is no greater absurdity in supposing that this could be done, than that the Mosaic history and laws could have been introduced among the Hebrews, in any other way than that which Moses has described.

If, therefore, positive absurdity is the result of any supposition, that the writings of Moses and of the succeeding books of scripture had any other origin, and were received by the Hebrews at any other times, than those which the different portions severally indicate, then we have only in this part of the subject to show, that these books were severally recognised as sacred by the Hebrew people.

And here we have one fact which is of itself conclusive; and that is, the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into the Greek language. In this translation, we have all the books of the Hebrew Bible, substantially in all their purity and integrity. This translation is attributed to the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and was made about 286 B.C. Whatever doubt there may be as to the exact date, it is certain that the version was referred to by Aristobulus, a writer who lived nearly two hundred years before Christ; and it is distinctly specified by Jesus the son of Sirach about 130 B.C., as containing the law, the prophets, and the other sacred books. In perfect accordance with this evidence, Philo and Josephus refer to these sacred books, as containing the principles of the Hebrew faith. The first, indeed, names but the greater number of them; whilst the latter, in the following important passage, proves,



that the Bible, as we have it, was the ever-recognised embodiment of the sacred books of the Hebrew church:—"We have not," says the Jewish historian, "thousands of books, discordant, and contradicting each other; but we have only twenty-two,\* which comprehend the history of all former ages, and are justly regarded as Divine. Five of them proceed from Moses; they include as well the *laws*, as an account of the creation of man extending to his (Moses's) death. This period comprehends nearly three thousand years. From the death of Moses to that of Artaxerxes, who was king of Persia after Xerxes, the prophets who succeeded Moses committed to writing, in thirteen books, what was done in their days. The remaining four books contain hymns to God," (the Psalms,) "and instructions of life for man." We find, therefore, from the evidence of this eminent Jewish writer, who lived in the apostolic age, that the Hebrew Bible and the institutions of that day were essentially the same as they are at present. We see from the Septuagint, that they were the same two hundred and fifty years previously. This being the case, it must follow,—from the utter impossibility of inducing the Hebrews to receive such books as sacred, and to adopt institutions as Divine, except from their immediate authors,—that we have the strongest possible external proof of the genuineness and authenticity of these sacred records.

Nor is this all. Isolated as the Hebrews were from other nations, we have nevertheless corroborative proofs of the main facts of sacred history in the records and monuments of contemporaneous Heathen nations. Manethon, the Egyptian, most distinctly speaks of Joseph, Moses, and of the Exodus. On the monument of Rek-shari, the chief architect of the temples and palaces of Thebes, there is a graphic pictorial exhibition of the Israelites engaged in brick-making under the cruel severity of their task-masters; even now it is impossible to mistake the Hebrew physiognomy.† It is also a remarkable fact, that more bricks have been found among the ruins of Egypt bearing the name of Thothmosis III., who was the "king that knew not Joseph," and the cruel persecutor of the Israelites, than of any other Pharaoh. The spoiling of Jerusalem by Shishak is as

\* Although this number differs from ours, it embraced all our books; for the Hebrews reckoned Judges and Ruth, Ezra and Nehemiah, the first and second Books of Kings, first and second Books of Chronicles, first and second Books of Samuel, and the twelve minor prophets, respectively, as one book: they thus reduced the number to twenty-two.

† OSBURN'S "Antiquities of Egypt," p. 220.

distinctly portrayed on the walls of the ruined palace at Karnak, as it is in the sacred record. Assyrian inscriptions celebrate the "conquest of the remote Judea," and the deportations of the Israelites ; and even bear the most unquestionable evidence to the truth of the scriptural account of the campaigns of Sennacherib, and of his fruitless efforts to take Jerusalem. Here also, on these disinterred sculptures, we have the most explicit proofs of the fulfilment of sacred prophecy : Babylon and Persia also afford, in their early history, similar corroborative testimony. We find, indeed, every where, memorials of history and facts which perfectly coincide with the sacred narrative, and which are utterly irreconcilable with any other account.

II. Besides this kind of proof, of the genuineness and authenticity of holy scripture, there is another, which is termed "internal evidence," and which refers to the subject-matter which they contain, and to the style and manner in which they are composed.

The first point of consequence to be noted in respect of this branch of the argument in favour of the integrity of the Old-Testament scriptures, refers to the language, and affords the most important evidence.

The earliest books of scripture, the writings of Moses, exhibit every mark of a language which had, through the improvements of successive ages, been fully developed. And from that time to the Babylonish Captivity, the language retained its purity and vigour ; so that this has been termed "the golden age" of the language. From the carrying away of the Jews into Babylon, the language greatly deteriorated ; and this is called "the silver age." This degeneracy is first observable in the language of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who stood on the verge of the two periods ; and is strongly marked in some of the later prophets, in a part of the Book of Psalms, and in the two Books of Chronicles. Soon after the return from Babylon, the Hebrew tongue gradually ceased to be a living language. These changes in the structure of Old-Testament language afford a strong proof of the genuineness and authenticity of these books, inasmuch as it renders any other than the alleged origin of them almost (if not altogether) impossible.

Another important element of this internal proof arises out of the promulgation of the Mosaic sacred and civil law. This, of all national changes, is the most difficult to misrepresent on the page of history. And hence the accounts which we have received of such changes as were made in the political constitution and polity of other nations, have never been called in

question. Who ever doubted that Solon propounded a new social code for the Athenians ; that Lycurgus gave the Spartans their peculiar system of government and manner of life ; or that Numa consolidated and established the laws and institutions of the Romans ? And yet we have stronger evidence by far, that Moses was the divinely-appointed legislator for Israel. The series of miracles which accompanied the giving of the law at Sinai were real, or the Hebrews could never have been induced to believe them. But they did believe them ; and the concurrent testimony of every neighbouring nation attests that, from the time of Moses downwards, the Hebrews were a peculiar people, living in the manner which these institutions required.

Further : the contents of these books afford conclusive proof of their integrity. Our limits will not allow of detailed illustration ; but it may be asserted as a most remarkable fact, that nothing but an admission of the truthful character of these books can account for their uniform inculcation of purity and their unflinching condemnation of sin. How should it come to pass, that not only one writer, but many, living in different ages, and moving in various situations in life, so invariably give the most elevated views of Deity, enjoin the purest morality, exhibit the desperate evil and fearful consequences of sin,—and manifest a theory and enforce a practice of righteousness far beyond that taught by any sages in any other nation ? How can this be accounted for on the supposition, that these books are false, or falsely presented to the world ? Nothing can more fully attest their entire truthfulness than the uniform holiness of their teaching. It might be easily shown that these arguments apply with equal force to all the Old-Testament scriptures. The books of Moses, in fact, established such civil and religious institutions, standards of truth, and continued supervision, as rendered successful forgery in after ages impossible.

I. We proceed now to consider the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament. These, from the circumstances of the case, had a different origin from the Hebrew scriptures ; and it consequently becomes an inquiry of some interest, as to the manner in which, and the time when, the books composing the New Testament were collected into one volume, and recognised by the church as of inspired authority.

The first certain notice which we have of the existence of any portion of the New-Testament writings in a connected form, is found in 2 Peter iii. 16 ; where the epistles of Paul are spoken of in such a manner as to lead to the conclusion, that, even at



that early period, the whole, or at least the greater part, of those epistles were collected together, and recognised by the churches generally as on a par with "the other scriptures;" by which expression the apostle Peter clearly means not only the books of the Old Testament, but also the other portions of the New Testament as far as then known and collected.

It is not possible now to state when or by whom this collection was begun and carried on. The probability is, that as these inspired apostolic writings were composed at different times and places, and primarily designed, many of them at least, for the benefit of particular churches, they were collected together in the several localities as opportunity offered, until at length a comparison of these numerous local compilations enabled the church to complete an entire copy of the whole of the New-Testament writings.

The external evidence in support of the integrity of these books is indeed very strong, I might have said, demonstrative. Let us, in the first place, notice the difficulty, if not the absolute impossibility, of a successful forgery of such documents as the New-Testament books.

That such accounts as the Gospels contain could have been received and circulated in Judea, so soon after the events which they profess to narrate are said to have occurred, if, indeed, no such person as Jesus Christ had lived,—is evidently impossible. It is equally impossible that the churches of Corinth, Ephesus, and Thessalonica, would have received and treasured up the epistles of Paul as sacred books, if he had not lived and preached the gospel among them. It may as reasonably be urged, that the great Reformation in England never took place, but is merely a trick of historians, as that the events narrated in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles did not actually occur. There is one fact which is conclusive on this head: Christianity did not arise, and the New-Testament writings did not acquire credence, under the protection of existing governments, but in defiance of them. For three hundred years, no one had any thing to fear from the exposure of mis-statements in the apostolic writings, if any such could have been found. On the contrary, the favour of the learned, the great, and the powerful, was sure to have been secured by such exposure. It is therefore utterly impossible, that such accounts as are given by the evangelists and apostles could have obtained credence, if they had been forged.

It is, however, not necessary to rest the case on this negative evidence: positive testimony of the most satisfactory kind can

be adduced, in support of the genuineness and authenticity of these sacred books. The supplementary character of the Gospel by John strongly indicates, that he had the other Gospels before him while he wrote. But the manner in which Ignatius speaks, who lived in the time of the apostles, and was probably one of John's converts, is decisive as to his appreciation of the apostolic writings. He alludes to his betaking himself to the "Gospels as to the flesh of Jesus, and to the apostles as to the presbytery of the church;" adding, "The prophets also we love;" thus proving, that he is referring to the scriptures. Theophilus of Antioch, who lived in the second century, frequently calls the New-Testament writings, αἱ ἅγιαι γραφαί, "the holy scriptures," and ὁ Θεῖος λόγος, "the word of God;" and in one passage mentions the law, the prophets, and the gospels as alike divinely inspired. Clement of Alexandria, who lived about the close of the second century, refers to the books of the New Testament, and calls them "the Gospels," and "the Apostolic Discourses." Tertullian, who flourished during the latter part of the second and the beginning of the third century, alludes to the New-Testament writings in a manner which indicates the existence of a complete canon of them in his day. He distinguishes between *Scriptura Vetus*, the "Old Scriptures," and *Novum Testamentum*, the "New Testament." Irenæus also, about the end of the second century, calls the New-Testament books, "The Holy Scriptures," "The Oracles of God;" and places them on an equal footing with "the law and the prophets."

That this early, continued, and concurring recognition of these sacred writings should not only have grown up amidst all the fury of persecution, and the fires of martyrdom, but have left such abundant evidence of the fact available at this day, is most extraordinary. It were easy to bring this same kind of evidence down through the succeeding centuries; but it is not necessary. No historical fact is better attested than the genuineness and authenticity of the New-Testament scriptures, even if we look only to external evidence.

II. In making this assertion, however, we by no means intimate that these scriptures are defective in the internal evidence of their integrity. On the contrary, this is equally decisive.

With respect to the language, style, idioms, figures, and allusions of the New Testament, they are all in precise accordance with the alleged origin and object of these productions. For if the several books differ, the difference is in

precise agreement with the known circumstances of the authors ; whilst in every respect these peculiarities prove that the writers of them were what they professed to be, Jews converted to Christianity. Another fact, of very considerable consequence to the inquiry, is found in the circumstance, that these men put themselves fairly forward as eye- and ear-witnesses to the truth of the statements which they published. They therefore challenged the contradiction of their contemporaries ; and when it is considered that the latter had every motive to refute the apostles if they had been able to do so, we have the highest proof of the truthfulness and integrity of their productions.

Nor can we turn away from the proofs supplied by the subject-matter published by the writers of the New Testament. Is it alleged to be falsehood and forgery ? What motive would have induced them to fabricate untruths ? Could a love of pains and penalties, of tortures, persecution, and death ? Look again. What did they publish ? A pure and elevated morality, the necessity of a change of heart, and a renewal of the human soul in righteousness ; so spiritual and holy, that even now the carnal mind, unsubdued by the Spirit of God, and unsoftened by fervent prayer, cannot adequately conceive it, much less fully practise it.

Further : they announced and recommended doctrines, views, and privileges of such spiritual purity and religious elevation, as are equally rational and holy. That these should have been excogitated by wicked men, is an impossibility. If our limits would allow, there are numerous points of the most convincing kind, which might be cited in detail ; but this part of our argument is so impregnable that it does not require extended elaboration.

If we could say no more than this for the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, we should have established for them a title to respect and authority which few other compositions are entitled to claim. But this is not all. We superadd to our demand, that these works should be received as genuine and authentic, a claim that they be regarded as divinely inspired, and therefore authoritative communications of the mind and law of God to mankind. In putting forward this claim, I am fully aware of the vast magnitude and vital consequence of such a requirement. This inspiration has been thus accurately defined by Horne : "A Divine inspiration, or the imparting such a degree of Divine assistance, influence, or guidance, as should enable the authors of the scriptures to communicate religious knowledge to others without error or mistake,



whether the objects of such communications were things then immediately revealed to those who declared them, or things with which they were before acquainted.”\*

Now, great as is confessedly this Divine gift of guidance, influence, or assistance, when regarded as communicated to all the writers in the Bible from Moses to John, in such plenitude as to save them from all “error or mistake;” it must be clear that nothing short of this can render it an authorised standard of truth. It becomes, then, a consideration of the utmost importance to ascertain, whether the authors of the several books composing the Bible were, in this extensive sense, inspired men.

The first question here to be settled is this:—“What evidence is necessary to establish and fully prove a claim to inspiration?” Nor does this seem to be a difficult question. The exercise of the intellect, energy, and power of the human mind, or, what is sometimes called man’s capacity, is sufficient to prove any act or work to have been the product of man: in a similar way the manifestation of a wisdom and power which is possessed by God alone, carries to the mind of man equally sufficient proof, that such results can only be ascribed to the influence of the Spirit of God.

We take miracles, for instance, as one of these appropriate proofs. It is not indeed absolutely certain, that every super-human work is an evidence of Divine Power. For aught we know, evil spirits may sometimes, under Divine permission, work *lying wonders*. A generally received definition of a miracle is thus given by Dr. S. Clarke: “A miracle is a work effected in a manner unusual, or different from the common and regular method of Providence, by the interposition of God himself, or of some intelligent agent superior to man, for the proof or evidence of some particular doctrine, or in attestation of the authority of some particular person.” Such works as are here described, we are prepared to contend, are adapted fairly and fully to attest the Divine Will, and to afford reasonable proof of Divine inspiration. Nor do we think we should go too far, if we were to assert that this accords with the common sense of mankind. What was the occasion of the first miracle of this kind of which we have any information, and who demanded the production of a miracle as a proof of a Divine mission? The conviction and demand of the wicked Pharaoh, whose proud and obstinate resistance to the Divine purpose led to all the wonders connected with the Exodus of the Israelites. This

\* HORNE’S “Introduction,” vol. i. p. 201.

fact, among many others, proves that it was in ancient times a commonly received opinion that miraculous actions were a suitable and efficient proof of Divine interposition.

We regard prophecy as another means of attesting the certain inspiration of the sacred writings. It, in fact, is just such an exhibition of Divine Prescience as a miracle affords of the Divine Power; for prophecy is a miracle of knowledge, a declaration, or description, or representation of something future, beyond the power of human sagacity to learn or to calculate. It has been truly asserted, that this is "the highest evidence that can be given of supernatural communication with the Deity, and of the truth of a revelation from God."

This, too, was generally admitted; and hence arose the crowd of soothsayers and prophets maintained at every oriental court, the seers of Greece as early as the days of Homer, the oracles which were so famous, and the augurs of Rome and of Etruria. Notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, we think there is good reason for concluding that Satanic agency was not unfrequently employed to sustain these Heathen institutions. In fact, this is more than once asserted in the Bible. Nor does this at all militate against the efficiency of sacred prophecy as a proof of the inspiration claimed for the sacred books. For God himself asserts, that he alone is possessed of foreknowledge. "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." (Isai. xlv. 9, 10.) Again the Lord says, "Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods." (Isai. xli. 23.) Yet although the case is thus fairly placed on this issue, there is not a single instance of undoubted prediction established on behalf of all the wise men, soothsayers, magicians, prophets, oracles, or augurs of the Heathen world. There is, indeed, evidence that Satan displayed the utmost cunning to sustain his cause; but he was unable to equal Divine Prescience. Cræsus, the king of Lydia, is a remarkable instance of this kind. Anxious to know the result of a war which he was meditating against Persia, he sent to consult the Delphian oracle. To test its power, he commanded his messengers, first, to ask, "What is Cræsus, king of Lydia, now doing?" Having previously arranged the exact time when this query was to be put, he took care to occupy himself in the most unkingly manner possible; for, at the moment, he was in his kitchen boiling a hare and a tortoise together in a brassen vessel. Notwithstanding this uncommon occupation

of the king, the Pythoness at once explicitly pointed out the whole of these very singular circumstances. When, however, the question as to the result of war was put, the answer was so ambiguous, that the king, after some hesitation, ventured upon the conflict, and was ruined. We have here a clear exhibition of what Satanic influence can do, and of what it cannot do, in such matters. It enabled the priestess to state distinctly what was doing at a great distance at that moment; but it could not empower her to foretell the result of a future contingent event.

Besides miracles and prophecies, there are other evidences of an internal kind that are also important proofs of Divine inspiration, to which it will be necessary to pay some attention. We may refer to these under the following heads:—The purity, holiness, and elevation of the doctrines and moral precepts of the Bible—the harmony and connexion of every part of the Bible, although written by so many persons in different countries and ages of the world—the uncorrupted preservation of these books through so long a period—the tendency of the scriptures to promote the present and future happiness of mankind—and the superior advantages which the Christian religion imparts over every other scheme which the world has known. All these are additional and corroborative proofs of Divine revelation; and if it can be clearly shown, that these are all found in combination in the books of holy scripture, this fact must be received as full proof of their Divine origin and character. We proceed to the prosecution of this inquiry.

We begin with the evidence afforded by miracles to the Divine inspiration of these holy books. Now, it will at once be perceived, that a miracle is a matter of fact, capable of being substantiated by proper and sufficient evidence. The contrary of this has been confidently asserted, on the allegation that a miracle is opposed to the general experience of mankind, and that no evidence can be successfully opposed to this weight of general experience. This is absurd. For no theist can doubt the possibility of a miracle; and yet, according to this arguing, we ought not to believe a miracle, although we saw one ourselves. A miracle, therefore, should not be regarded as incredible. It may be freely conceded, that a larger and clearer amount of evidence would be necessary to authenticate an account of a miraculous action, than would be required to induce us to receive an account of an ordinary event. Much that is technical and arbitrary has been advanced on this



subject in the way of rules and criteria, to all of which we cannot subscribe. I shall therefore pass on to a consideration of some of the most important miracles recorded in holy scripture. I adopt this course as it will bring us more immediately into contact with the word of God, than would any abstract reasoning upon laws and rules.

We proceed to review, in the first instance, some of the most important of the miracles wrought by Moses. The plagues of Egypt afford a remarkable class of evidence. Moses receives his commission from God, and is sent as his minister to Pharaoh, who demands a miracle as a proof of his Divine appointment. He at once transforms his rod into a serpent. This not being considered sufficient, a series of splendid miracles were performed to attest the Divine vocation of Moses. In this instance there is every proof of miraculous action, of which the circumstances of the case admit. Generally, notice was given previously, to the Egyptian king, of the nature of each of the inflictions:—they took place at the time announced, and instantly without the possible intervention of second causes:—they were of a character to render mistake impossible:—and, to cut off all chance of this being an invention or fraud of after-times, the institution of the Passover was from that precise time established as a perpetual memorial, in all future ages, of the great culminating point of that series of Divine judgments,—the death of the first-born. The passage of the Red Sea was another splendid interposition of Divine Power; equally important in its object, instantaneous in its action, public and unmistakable in its appearance and results. The miracles of Sinai and of the wilderness were of the same kind. The copious streams of water brought, by a word, out of the rock at Sinai;—the manna given daily for forty years, in sufficient quantity to sustain upwards of two millions of persons:—these were miracles of the grandest order. They were necessary to the existence of the Lord's people; they were public, were clearly wrought by miraculous agency, (for nothing else could have produced such effects,) and the truth which they were appointed to authenticate was clearly the divinely revealed moral, ecclesiastical, and civil laws promulgated by Moses. But whilst these miracles attested the Divine legation of the Hebrew lawgiver, the laws and institutions, on the other hand, constituted the most public and perpetual memorial of them that can be conceived. We will notice one other Old-Testament miracle, which, from its extraordinary character and completeness, deserves especial attention.

We allude to the miraculous passage of the Jordan by the Israelites under Joshua. This miracle, like many of those previously noticed, was foretold, and the attention of millions of people was called to it. The peculiar nature of the act did not admit of deception. Here was a swift river, which overflowed its banks, pouring its waters unceasingly and rapidly into the Dead Sea. Yet, confident in the promised interposition of God, Joshua marshalled his host; the Levites bearing the ark passing on before, and the tribes with their substance and cattle following after it. At length the Levites reached the river, and proceeded onward as though it did not exist; and as soon as the feet of those who bore the ark of God touched the water, that part of it which was below them flowed on, whilst that above recoiled, and flowed backward; so that the bed of the Jordan was left quite dry. The ark remained in the midst of the river until all the host had passed over, and then until twelve stones had been taken from the bed of the river, to rear up a perpetual memorial of this wonderful event to all succeeding generations. Let all the particulars of this miraculous interposition be considered, by any candid and intelligent person; and we are persuaded that he must come to the conclusion, that we have here a most wonderful miracle, clearly exhibiting the omnipotent power of God exerted for the benefit of his elect people, for the accomplishment of his gracious and declared purposes concerning them, and for the perfect attestation of his truth, and of his avowed covenant-relation to them. Numerous other instances might be cited from the Old Testament: but it is not necessary. No miracles, grander in their character, more clearly the result of immediate Divine action, or more fully and permanently attested than these, can possibly be adduced. Those, therefore, who admit that miraculous acts are valid and sufficient proofs of Divine inspiration, can require no farther evidence of this kind in respect of the Mosaic institutions, and the early part of the Old-Testament history. Of course, those who do not admit this kind of proof, will be alike dissatisfied with any amount of it. But if these proofs are admitted, then the other similar instances which might be adduced, and the intimate union pervading every part of Hebrew history, fully extend the evidence of miracles over the far greater part, if, indeed, not over the whole, of the Old-Testament writings.

We next pass on to a consideration of the evidences afforded by the miracles of our Redeemer and his apostles.

Here we observe, that the reality of these miracles was never

doubted by those who witnessed them. Inveterate as was their opposition to Christ, deadly as was their enmity,—so much so that they readily ascribed the wonders which they witnessed to the agency of Satan,—they did not, they could not, deny their truly miraculous character. It must also be considered, that these miracles are very numerous. The Gospels, indeed, are full of the miracles of Christ; and about forty of them are given at length. It will be seen, therefore, that opportunities of detection in the case of fraud were multiplied. Further: it is observable, that the miracles of Christ were of a peculiarly abiding and permanent character. At the time of his crucifixion, three persons were probably alive whom he had raised from the dead. Numbers of blind had been restored to sight, some of them having been born in that state. Many who had been maimed, had their limbs healed by his potent word; the palsied system and the withered arm being with equal ease restored to strength and vigour. Multitudes had likewise been recovered from all manner of sickness. Now, in respect of all these miracles, the evidence of their reality and validity is not limited to those who were present at the moment when the Saviour exerted his power and effected the cure. Besides the astonished spectators, those persons who had been the objects of his mercy and Divine energy remained living witnesses of this miraculous power. Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain, all remained, with their friends and the members of their several families, to attest the reality of their having been raised from the dead. Every individual case continued throughout succeeding years open to inquiry, and to the application of permanent proof. The same observation applies to the other cures: so that whilst the miracles of Christ were fraught with the most perfect and widely-extended beneficence, and were adapted to alleviate human suffering and sorrow, they were so wrought as to challenge the utmost amount of scrutiny, and afford the clearest demonstration of their Divine origin and undoubted reality.

It is further worthy of remark, that these miracles were wrought openly and publicly in all simplicity and ingenuousness, at the greatest distance from pomp and display,—the usual accompaniments of false miracles. There was no concealment, nothing like a selection of opportunity, no mystery. Unlike the pretended miracles of Heathenism, Mahomedanism, and Popery, they were beheld wherever wretchedness sought for pity, or suffering called for compassion. This is the more remarkable, because, in consequence of such a course of action,



they were effected—not in retirement, but—before multitudes, and in the presence of the most powerful, learned, and influential of the community. More than this: they were performed before the inveterate enemies of Christ, and the deadly opponents of his gospel. Yet, even in such circumstances, so clear and unmistakable were these manifestations of Divine power, that they were not impugned, or in any measure denied.

The miracles wrought by the apostles were of precisely the same character as those of their Master. Essentially benevolent, they were wrought openly, and without reserve or concealment, as occasion offered; they were adapted to vindicate and establish their own Divine vocation, challenged the most ample investigation, and afforded undoubted proof of the presence and exercise of Divine power.

But, amid all this constellation of wonders, there is one miracle, which, taken apart from every other, would of itself be sufficient to establish the Divine inspiration of the New-Testament story; and this, I hardly need say, is the miraculous resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Essential as we know this to be, in order to the completion of the gospel-scheme, it seems—not only on this account, but also from the vast range of opposing influences with which it stood connected, and the numerous demonstrative proofs which it brings to the whole of the evangelical system—to stand out prominently as the leading miracle of the New-Testament economy. We will therefore briefly recite the leading points of this important argument. First, it will be necessary to state, in the language of the New Testament, the vital consequence of this fact to the Christian system. “If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” (1 Cor. xv. 13—17.) The essential importance of the fact being then so distinctly and emphatically recognised, we notice, next in order, that this resurrection of Christ was clearly and frequently predicted. We have not only the words of Christ in which, during his life, he uttered these predictions, but also the certain proof that these were generally understood and received as such. This appears from the language of the chief priests and pharisees to Pilate:—“Sir,” said they, “we remember that that deceiver

said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." Having thus briefly stated the importance of this event, and the assurance that it was predicted, we proceed to the evidence which establishes the certainty of the fact.

It may be necessary, in the first instance, to prove the certainty of his death. This is seen not only by the testimony of the evangelists and the assertions of his disciples, but by the conduct of the persecuting Jews, and of the Heathen Romans. The latter brake not his legs, "seeing that he was dead already;" and the former fully admitted it, in their address to Pilate, "That deceiver said, *while he was yet alive.*" No pretence whatever therefore can be set up for doubting, that Jesus Christ was laid in the sepulchre truly and really a dead man.

We come then to the fact of his removal. On the morning of the first day of the week, the stone was seen to have been rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, and the body of Jesus was not found there. How or by what means had it been removed? The report propagated by the chief priests,—namely, "that his disciples came and stole him away" whilst the guards were asleep,—is really the only one which merits notice in opposition to the apostolic statement. In this account there are several points to be considered.

First, the number and condition of the disciples. They were but few; and, from the whole scope of the narrative, were greatly terrified at the death of their Master, and much alarmed for their own personal safety. Of the twelve there was not one who dared to stand by his Lord during the mock trial to which he was subjected. "Then all the disciples forsook him and fled," is the brief but candid and self-condemnatory language, with which the evangelist records their conduct on the fatal night of the Lord's apprehension. Yet this allegation supposes that these men, recovering from their panic, not only quickly rallied, but actually set at defiance the armed authority of Jewish rulers and Roman soldiers, and ventured to steal the body of their Master within a few hours of his execution.

Then, again: The rulers were aware of the danger, and provided, as they thought, effectually against it. They knew the prophecy, and employed all their tact and ingenuity to defeat it; and, having taken every precaution, they confidently awaited the issue. The stone was sealed; and a watch of Roman soldiers placed as a guard over the sepulchre. In addition to these preventive measures, it must be remembered that this event happened at the time when a great public festival was celebrated; when Jerusalem was full of people, having, as

is generally supposed, above one million of persons in the city and suburbs ; whilst the sepulchre was close to the city ; and, as if Providence had taken special care to insure publicity, the moon was exactly at the full ; so that there was no approach to darkness throughout the whole of the night. Add to this, that the guard at the tomb was composed of Roman soldiers accustomed to this kind of duty, whose military law exposed every man found asleep at his post to the punishment of death. Yet, in this most remarkable concurrence of circumstances, most unfavourable to the attempt of impostors, we are asked to believe that the soldiers were, on that cold night, in the open air, all asleep at the same time. And, as if to complete the category of improbabilities, these guards are brought forward as witnesses of what was done *whilst they were sleeping* ! It is scarcely possible to conceive of a more complete chain of absurdities than those which we find involved in this allegation. It is, however, based upon an improbability so glaring, and so seldom noticed, that it deserves especial mention. To give any colour whatever to this solution of the question, we must suppose that the disciples who had associated with this wonderful teacher, and miracle-working leader, immediately on his death formed a deep and deliberate design to fasten by imposture a false system of faith on the world. Now the plain and palpable facts of the case completely disprove this surmise. Then we must believe, that they were prepared for the cruel and ignominious death of their Master ; for which there is not the slightest show of reason. Yet if it had not been so, could they within thirty-six hours have been prepared to steal the body of that Master from a guard of Roman soldiers ? And, more than all this, we must believe that when Jesus was slain, his afflicted and terrified disciples determined to steal his body, and to attempt, for the sake of propagating a falsehood, the most improbable and, in fact, impossible task of daring all that fury to which he had fallen a victim. Now we do not hesitate to say, that there is not one of all these points which is not sufficient of itself to refute the absurd story of the Jewish rulers.

But then, if the disciples did not take away the body, the question returns, "What became of it?" We answer, that Jesus Christ was, by the mighty power of God, raised from the dead. This is proved by the testimony of the apostles as eye- and ear-witnesses of the facts which they related. The first question is, "Who are these witnesses?" So far as regards the scriptural account, we rely on the testimony of the following :



—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James, and Peter. The appearances of the Lord Jesus after his resurrection, and prior to his ascension, are thus recorded in the New Testament.

To Mary Magdalene alone, (Mark xvi. 9,) who saw Jesus standing. (John xx. 14.)

To the women coming from the sepulchre. (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.)

To Simon Peter alone. (Luke xxiv. 34.)

To the two disciples going to Emmaus. (Luke xxiv. 31.)

To the apostles, in the absence of Thomas. (John xx. 19, 20.)

To the apostles, eight days afterwards, with Thomas. (John xx. 26—29.)

At the sea of Tiberias, when seven of the apostles were fishing. (John xxi. 1—15.)

To the eleven in Galilee. (Matt. xxviii. 16, 17.)

To above five hundred brethren at once. (1 Cor. xv. 6.)

Afterwards to James. (1 Cor. xv. 7.)

Lastly, to all the apostles, just prior to his ascension. (Luke xxiv. 51; Acts i. 9.)

It will be observed, on referring to these eleven cases, that they afford, in their variety, the most complete proof of the absence of all fraud. These appearances took place not only before very different persons, and were, when taken together, a very great number; but they occurred under almost every possible variety of time and condition; at almost every hour of the day; sometimes to one person in quiet retirement, at another to five hundred; then the appearance is several times repeated to the same individuals, so that, the greatness of the first surprise being worn away, there would be every ability and disposition to guard against any attempt at deception. It is indeed scarcely possible to conceive of a more open, honest, and complete proof of any fact than that which we have in the Gospels of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Still, however, it may be urged, "All this proof rests on the testimony of the apostles: and are they credible witnesses?" This is not only a very fair but a very important branch of the inquiry, and one which we have no hesitation in discussing. Let us then, on this head, call special attention to the following particulars respecting the apostles, regarded as witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. Notice, first, the condition of these individuals: They were poor unlettered men, possessing neither station nor wealth, and were not very remarkable for eloquence. How then could they hope to succeed in palming a deception on

the world, and especially with the notorious and admitted fact, that the population to whom this witness was given were all marshalled against them?

Then regard their number: One or possibly two might agree to broach a falsehood; but, even in our own times, it is seldom that the culpable parties, however shrewd they may be, can sustain a concocted untruth against the successive cross-questioning of opposers, and the still more potent developements of time. How is it likely, then, that seven or eleven would be able to maintain the plausibility of a falsehood under such circumstances?

Next observe the incredulity of these men. They themselves partook of the popular expectation, that Christ would be a conquering and reigning earthly prince. Just ten days before Pentecost, they asked him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Remember how Peter rejected the declaration of the sufferings of his Divine Master, and how obstinately Thomas disbelieved his resurrection. Nay, even whilst the risen body of the Lord stood before them, they were terrified and affrighted, and thought they saw a spirit. Were these the men to be easily deceived? On the contrary, as they received the proof themselves slowly and even doubtingly, so, when assured of the fact, they were prepared boldly to declare that they knew their Lord to be alive *by many infallible proofs*.

This case does not, like many alleged wonders or miracles, rest upon the evidence of one man, or of one of the senses: here are many witnesses who, by the evidence of all the senses applicable to the fact, attest it as of their own knowledge.

Observe, in the next place, the evident impossibility of the apostles succeeding in palming a deception of this kind upon the world. It may indeed be urged, as a preliminary observation, that, even according to the evidence of their opposers, the moral character of the apostles raises them above all suspicion of this kind. But, waving this, how could they have succeeded, if they had been so disposed, and there had been occasion for their doing it? We have already referred to their humble condition in life. It has also been further argued, that the apostles could not have maintained a false testimony to the Saviour's resurrection, unless they had by mutual consent agreed upon a false relation of all the details which they published; and that such agreement could not have been made and maintained by so many persons, in opposition to the continued persecution, suffering, and death to which they were continually exposed. But we add, to this, our solemn conviction

that the apostles could not have done this, because, if this testimony of theirs be false, the whole scheme of the gospel must also be false : and that wicked men could falsely devise a system so profound in holy reason, and harmonious in exalted truth, is impossible. It must also be remembered here, that the subject-matter of this testimony was not any result of profound speculation or of abstruse calculation, but a simple matter of fact ; namely, the appearance of Jesus Christ alive after he had been killed and buried.

Then the circumstances in which the apostles gave this evidence afford the strongest corroboration of its truth : they perfectly agreed in their statements : they simply but firmly declared this matter of fact before every kind of judicial authority. They stood unmoved while they asserted this truth before the same priestly authorities who had procured the death of Jesus. With equal decision they gave the same testimony before the Areopagites of Athens and the philosophers of Greece, as well as before the imperial authorities of Rome. Nor was this evidence delayed until the attention of the public was turned away from the affair. On the contrary, only three days elapsed from the crucifixion before it was publicly announced, that Jesus was risen from the dead ; and within fifty days, whilst the blood of Christ still dyed the soil of Calvary, and all Jerusalem was excited by the strange scenes which it had witnessed, the proclamation was made by hundreds of people, in every language, that Jesus was raised from the dead, and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. There is another remarkable circumstance. The resurrection was not first proclaimed at Rome, or at Athens, or in Egypt, but at Jerusalem, where the horrid atrocity had been perpetrated, and where the murderers still lived. There, they were publicly challenged to controvert the statements ; and there, notwithstanding all the power and craft of the enemies of Christ, the evidence was received so extensively, that even “ a multitude of the priests believed.”

Two or three other considerations will complete this evidence. For what purpose did the disciples of Jesus so diligently exert themselves in asserting and circulating a knowledge of this cardinal truth ? Did they seek honour ? or covet wealth ? or aim at ambitious distinction ? They did not indulge themselves in any such dreams. In the spirit of their Divine Master, they simply aimed at the salvation of mankind, including even the men who murdered the Lord of life and glory. It was this motive which led them on, in all their labour and suffering. It was this which induced them to dare every danger, even death itself



Now this single-minded, benevolent, charitable, and pious object is utterly incompatible with the existence of falsehood and fraud in the same parties. Then, observe the manifest change in the deportment of the apostles after the resurrection of Christ ; and especially after the day of Pentecost. Before these events, they were timid, apprehensive, and fearful. Now, the concoction and publication of a falsehood could not have made this striking alteration, and inspired them with that boldness which they ever afterwards evinced. An eminent author well observes : “ *Before*, they were less than men ; *afterwards*, they were more than heroes.”

Add to this change the miracles which the apostles wrought in attestation of this fact. Take, as one instance, the cure of the cripple who was healed in “ the Beautiful gate of the temple.” Here was a wonderful miracle publicly performed ; one which attracted instant and general attention, and induced the people in amazement to crowd around the apostles as they stood by the side of the man who had been healed, to know the cause of this surprising cure. The apostles soon explained the whole matter :—“ Ye denied the Holy One ;.....and killed the Prince of life, *whom God hath raised from the dead* ; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know.” (Acts iii. 14—16.) So, when on this account they stood before the chief priests, the same apostle declared, “ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, *whom God raised from the dead*, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.” (Acts iv. 10.) We need not wonder, that, even by these men, this evidence was felt to be unanswerable. But it is equally apparent, that its point and power is the grand fact of the resurrection of the body of Jesus from the dead.

We see, then, that this prime article of our faith stands before us, attested by the most invincible evidence. And this point, being so fully established, throws its proof over the whole extent of the subject, and demonstrates the certain inspiration of the sacred volume. For, if it is admitted as an undoubted fact, that Christ was raised from the dead, then it follows, from the close and constant connexion subsisting between the several sacred books, that they all possess the same origin and character.

We now direct attention to the important evidence which the prophecies contained in the holy scriptures afford to their inspiration. A definition of this miracle of knowledge has been

already given : it is only necessary, therefore, to give an abstract of the proof which is thus afforded. My limits will not allow a general discussion on the use and intent of prophecy, since the Divine gift is here regarded simply as a proof of Divine inspiration. Nor shall we go into any comparison of the prophecies of holy scripture with the responses of Heathen oracles ; for, as we have already observed, they were no *prophecies*. These oracles did sometimes unquestionably go beyond human knowledge in their responses, and so did some of the ancient soothsayers : but we venture to assert, that there is not on record one clear statement of foreknowledge from any of these Heathen sources. Answers evincing superhuman knowledge there may be, like the answer to Cræsus. Cases have occurred like that of the Pythoness at Philippi, where superhuman intelligence was unquestionably displayed by demon agency ; but there was no real prediction. Foreknowledge is an attribute of Deity alone, and one which even Satan cannot imitate.

The prophecies of holy scripture have been divided into four sections :—I. Those which refer to the Jewish people :—II. To the neighbouring Gentile nations :—III. To the promised Messiah :—IV. And those of Christ and his apostles. This, although sufficient for our purpose, scarcely includes the whole of the wide range of scripture prophecy ; as Moses and the prophets delivered many prophecies which extended far beyond what is indicated by the first three sections, even to the crowning glories of Messiah's kingdom.

We will, however, confine our observations to two or three selections from each of these classes.

I. We notice, in the first place, the prophecies respecting the number and greatness of Abraham's posterity through Isaac. The portions of scripture to which attention is particularly directed, are the following : Gen. xvii. 15—21 ; xxii. 17, 18. The first of these remarkable predictions was given when Abraham was an old man, aged ninety-nine years, and when his wife was nearly ninety ; yet they predicted, that of this wife he should have a son, from whom kings and nations were to descend. The second was announced when this promised son was a lad ; and it assured his father that his seed should be numerous "as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is upon the sea-shore." Many other passages might be quoted of similar import. It may then be asked, Can we conceive a more strange and unlikely combination of events, than those which were necessary for the accomplishment of these prophecies ? Yet they were all minutely and exactly fulfilled.

Notwithstanding the advanced age of Sarah, her son was born ; and, in less than five hundred years, one branch of his posterity alone numbered six hundred thousand men, besides women and children. Yet this was only the beginning of Hebrew greatness : onward rolled the rapid increase of their population, until God's covenant-people became the most powerful nation of Western Asia, and ruled from Lebanon to the Persian Gulf, from Egypt to the Euphrates.

Not only were the number and greatness of the Hebrew people predicted, but also their place of residence, whilst as yet their progenitors possessed no territory, and lived as nomadic wanderers. These predictions are contained in the following and in several other passages of scripture : Gen. xii. 7 ; xiii. 14—17 ; xv. 13—21. All these were delivered to the father of the faithful, while Abraham was an old and childless man, possessing no portion of ground, nor right of settled location any where. It is, further, a very singular feature of these predictions, that the fact of Abraham's descendants going down into Egypt, and suffering there a cruel bondage, was neither overlooked nor concealed. This was not only most distinctly declared, but its precise period pointed out ; so that when the exodus took place, we are told, that, "in the self-same day" as had been foretold, the prophecy was wonderfully accomplished, until, in the appointed time, the promised territory, in all its length and breadth, was occupied by the Hebrew people.

But lest predictions of success and extension might be doubted, as possibly devised for the purpose of flattering national vanity, the prophecies of holy scripture respecting the Hebrews are as full of denunciations of calamity and woe, as their history has been of the penal visitations to which they were subjected in consequence of their numerous sins. The twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy is a wonderful collection of these prophecies. From the 20th verse to the 62d, we find a continued series of predictive threatenings. And yet, when compared with the history of the Hebrew people, we perceive that all have either been fulfilled, or are now in a course of accomplishment.

It is scarcely right to exclude, from this section, the predictions which were delivered respecting Ishmael. In answer to the prayer of his father, the Lord declared, "Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly ; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." (Gen. xvii. 20.) And in the preceding



chapter the Angel of the Lord gave a prophetic statement, yet more remarkable, to Ishmael's mother : "Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael ; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man ; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him ; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." (Gen. xvi. 11, 12.)

Observe, that these prophecies were given, for the most part, concerning a child before his birth ; and, in the other case, while he was a lad. And who was this youth ? and what the circumstances in which he was found ? He was the son of an Egyptian slave, abandoned by his father, and cast out into the desert to earn a subsistence by his own efforts. Yet of this lad it is predicted, that he should be the father of twelve sons, that these should be princes, that their posterity should be exceedingly numerous ; and, what is yet more remarkable, it is asserted, that, whilst opposed to every other people, and assailed on every side, they should be able still to maintain their position, and to "dwell in the presence of all their brethren." The history of the descendants of Ishmael, from his day to ours, has afforded one continual verification of this prophecy. He became eminent as an archer, was the father of twelve sons, who, according to Moses, were "princes according to their nations," (Gen. xxv. 16,) and, as Strabo calls them, "phylarchs," or rulers of tribes.

These were the fathers of the Arabians, one of the most numerous races of people which we know, as descended from one individual at such a late period of human history. But their constant warfare, and ever-maintained independence, are, after all, the most remarkable features in the fulfilment of this wonderful prophecy. "His hand shall be against every man," has been fulfilled from the days of Ishmael to this day. Their aggressions have been constant and notorious : spoil and rapine have been with them, generally, as legitimate an occupation as commerce is with other nations. And hence, when they have obtained a certain amount or a given quantity of goods by robbery, they usually say, "I have gained it." But has not this constant disposition to purloin the property of neighbours and travellers induced the powerful surrounding nations to assail and subdue them ? It has led to many fierce and bloody contests. Cyrus, in all his might of power, and thirst for dominion, did not (as Herodotus distinctly asserts) subdue Arabia. Alexander purposed directing his arms against them, but died before he had time to enter on the war. Antigonus,

one of the greatest and most martial of his successors, sent two successive armies against the Arabians; but both these expeditions failed. Nor did the Romans, vast as was their power, reduce these people to obedience; so that, notwithstanding their hand was against every man, and every man's hand against them, they still maintained their independence, were never fully subdued, and remain to this day in the same position, evincing the same hostile disposition, and still dwelling in the presence of their brethren.

It will be seen, that this section of prophecy most unequivocally proves the exercise of the Divine prescience in attestation of his revealed truth. It cannot here be alleged, that the prophecies were written after the events occurred; for, in the case of both the Jews and the Arabians, their condition even now fulfils the predictions. Indeed, in every respect the evidence is indubitable.

II. We proceed next to notice some few of the prophecies delivered respecting Gentile cities and nations.

Here we first notice the case of Tyre. This was the capital of the far-famed Phenician nation, and was certainly one of the most wealthy and flourishing cities of ancient times. Yet, against this proud and gorgeous place the inspired prophets denounced the most terrible afflictions, which were to be consummated in its entire and perpetual ruin. Let me direct your attention to the following scriptures: Ezek. xxvi. 3—5, 14, 21; xxviii. 19. It is saying but little, to assert that these predictions have been fully accomplished. They have had their fulfilment in the most remarkable manner.

Nebuchadnezzar, whilst engaged in reducing Western Asia to his sway, turned his arms against this powerful city, whose merchants were princes; and encountered an opposition proportioned to their spirit and wealth, and the extent of their resources. Thirteen years did this city resist the utmost efforts of the Babylonian warrior; but, in the fourteenth, it fell beneath his power, and was totally destroyed. Yet it seemed, even after this terrible disaster, as if the perpetuity of ruin so emphatically marked in the prophecy, by the iterated declaration, "Thou shalt be no more," was to fail. For, after a few years, Tyre rose again, equally proud in power and gorgeous in wealth and grandeur. It is true, the old city on the mainland was never rebuilt; but New Tyre was erected on an adjoining island, which was essentially a restoration of the old city. Centuries passed away; and it seemed as though the prediction was, at least in part, defeated by the existence, prosperity, and power of

the Tyrian city. But "the word of God is sure." Alexander at length began his aggressions in Asia. Tyre attracted the notice of this warrior, and resisted his power. Then, however, although the defence of the city was most desperate, it lasted but seven months, when it was taken by storm and entirely destroyed; and although, in this instance, the Tyrians had sent their wives and children to Carthage that Tyre might afterward be rebuilt, and occupied by Tyrians, it remains to this day in perfect ruin.

We, in the next instance, refer to the predictions respecting Egypt. These are numerous, and might be quoted at length from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. But we confine our attention to the following extracts from the last of these prophets: "I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations. The pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord God. And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the LORD have spoken it. Thus saith the Lord God; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." (Ezek. xxix. 10, 15; xxx. 6, 12, 13.) The fulfilment of these predictions is so complete, that it might be made the subject of extended observation at once interesting and profitable. It is so strongly marked by great facts, that we may do all that is necessary for our purpose within a brief space.

Mark a few points:—The total ruin of Upper Egypt. As Syene, or E'Sooan, is now the southern extremity of Egypt, it has been shown that the words will bear another sense, and may be rendered "from Migdol to Syene." Migdol is supposed to have been a town near the Red Sea; and the prophecy to have referred to the entire length of Egypt: It will cast light on this subject to mention, that the Hebrew term *Migdol*, is literally "*the Tower*," and therefore might have been applied to any town distinguished by a tower, or to the tower of one or more towns. The only means, therefore, of fixing the sense of the text, is by reference to *Cush*, or Ethiopia. It is probable that, by *Migdol* here, we should understand the place mentioned by Moses, Exod. xix. 2. If so, the prediction refers to the



whole of Upper and Middle Egypt, including the Thebaid : and, surely, no ruin can be more complete than this. Further : we are told, that Egypt shall be a base nation, shall no more rule over the nations, nor have a native prince. Can this be true of Egypt, whose power had been felt on the Euphrates ? Yes : and the fact is so. It was permanently subdued by the Persians, passed under the sway of Alexander, was ruled afterward by the Greek Ptolemies, then by the Romans, afterward by the Saracens and Mamelukes in succession, and is now a province of the Turkish empire. So that for ages there has not been an Egyptian prince ruling over Egypt. Then mark the peculiarity of the denunciation : The land is to be given to strangers, to "the wicked ;" and yet the idols and images are to be destroyed. This, in the days of the prophet, would be regarded as an impossibility. But such is the fact. Ever since Egypt has been cursed with Mahomedan rule, she has indeed been tyrannized over by strangers, and her land has been sold to the wicked ; her idols also and images have been totally destroyed.

Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Media, and other nations might here be cited in connexion with a wide range of prophecy : we will, however, satisfy ourselves with referring to the four successive monarchies predicted by Daniel. It will not be necessary to recite these at length : they are found in chapters ii. 31—45 ; vii. 1—18 ; viii. 1—7.

It will be observed here, that, in respect of the first or Babylonian monarchy, this statement of the prophet can scarcely be called a prophecy :—"Thou, O king," said the inspired seer to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of gold." Here, then, we have an unquestionable starting-point. But, before we pass on to the second, it may be desirable to observe, that the reference to the first of these kingdoms in the prophecy, where they are symbolized by the beasts, is peculiarly significant. We are told by the prophet, that the first was "like a lion, and had eagles' wings." Much curious speculation has been called forth by this strange symbolism : but it has been all set at rest by the recent discoveries in the east. The disinterred sculptures show, that both in Assyria and Babylon cherubic-like figures—most frequently in the form of a lion's body, with a human head and immense wings—were the prevailing representations in all their palaces, and the constant appendages to all their public buildings. When, therefore, this symbolism was presented to the mind of the prophet, there can be no doubt that it as clearly pointed out Babylon,

as succeeding to Assyrian power, as the delineation of a national banner would indicate any such change in a modern kingdom.

The second empire was set forth by the breast and arms of silver in the great image, as a bear among the great beasts, and as a ram with two horns, one of which was higher than the other. This is distinctly explained to the prophet, as the combined powers of Media and Persia; (Dan. viii. 20;) and sculptured figures, precisely similar to these descriptions, have been found in the ruins of Persepolis. These symbols, therefore, delineate the Medo-Persian empire, which was founded by Cyrus, who soon subverted the Babylonian monarchy, and who, with his successors, ruled the world as a paramount power for upwards of two hundred years.

The third kingdom, represented by the belly and thighs of brass, the leopard with the wings of a fowl, and the he-goat, was the Macedonian empire of Alexandria. This, also, is distinctly announced to the prophet; (Dan. viii. 21;) and is amply confirmed by fact and history. Two hundred years before the time of Daniel, the progenitors of the Macedonians were denominated *Ægeadæ*, or "the Goats' people," and their city *Ægeæ*, or "Goats' Town." Besides this, Alexander specially adopted this term, and called his son Alexander *Ægus*, or "the son of the Goat." Indeed this sort of heraldic denomination was so intimately associated with the conquests and kingdom of Alexander, that some of his immediate successors had representations of themselves on their coins with a goat's horn on the side of the head. This kingdom existed in its original power and integrity only during the life of Alexander, but, within that time, it fully verified the prediction, —the rapidity and completeness of the subversion of Persia by the swiftly succeeding series of his conquests. The division of his dominions between his four principal generals was clearly indicated by the four heads of the leopard.

The fourth kingdom, portrayed by the legs and feet of the image, and by the fourth beast "dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly," was unquestionably the Roman power. This is fully confirmed by the fact of its unequalled military strength, co-existing as it did with internal disunion and class-antagonism. No people ever evinced such continued military prowess as the Romans; while none ever engaged in so many civil wars, in such perpetual and violent discord. The strength of iron remained, although the parts were as disjointed as would be an attempt to amalgamate equal quantities of "iron

and miry clay." Indeed, so minute is the description of the prophet, that the means to which they resorted, in order to heal or prevent the dissensions of these rival factions by the intermarriages of the families of their chiefs, are as distinctly marked in the prophecy, as they are seen in the history. This power, having subdued every opposing nation, extended its sway over most of the then known world. This being done, and all the preliminary arrangements of Divine appointment having been completed, Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, appeared; and, by his teaching, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, set up the promised kingdom of God, "in the days of these kings," according to the word of this prophecy.

It is scarcely possible to conceive of more undoubted and strongly cumulative evidence, in support of the Divine inspiration of the sacred records, than is found in the fulfilment of these wonderful prophecies. Ranging as they do over the prominent events of the world's history for six hundred years, it is impossible that forgery or foresight, contrivance or mistake, can alloy such invincible proofs. This evidence clearly attests the presence and perfectness of the Divine prescience in the communications which are made through the sacred scriptures.

III. We proceed in the next place to notice briefly the prophecies relating to the coming of Messiah in this aspect, namely, as affording a proof of the inspiration of the Bible.

Before referring to particular texts, it may be necessary to observe, that this kind of evidence is specially important. From the obvious impossibility of a great number of men, living in distant countries and in different ages of the world, conspiring together to palm on mankind the story of redemption through a suffering Saviour, it must follow, that if those passages relate to this event, they must have been divinely inspired. We have, therefore, not only the foreknowledge of God displayed here as a proof of his truth, but also all the grandeur of conception and boundless range of love, mercy, wisdom, and power developed in the scheme of redemption, as a collateral evidence of its Divine inspiration. Our limits will not permit the citation of these prophecies at length. The reader is, however, requested to turn to Gen. xlix. 10. By the term *Shiloh*, the ancient Hebrews understood the "Messiah." This passage therefore asserts, that the tribe of Judah should retain the governing power until Messiah's coming. But, in the time of Christ, we have the first distinct admissions, that the Jewish rulers had lost this power. They say, "We have no king



but Cæsar.”—“It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.” The time of Messiah’s coming was thus distinctly predicted, and this prediction exactly fulfilled about sixteen hundred years afterward. Daniel, in another manner, foretold the period of Messiah’s advent. He stated that “seventy weeks” would elapse from the proclamation to rebuild Jerusalem, to the completion of Messiah’s redeeming work. To English readers the phrase “seventy weeks” would convey the impression of four hundred and ninety days, or about sixteen months. But this was not the case with the Hebrews. Their civil and religious institutions so fully divided their years into sevens by the appointment of the sabbatic weeks, and these again into periods embracing seven of these weeks of years, when the year of jubilee returned, that the term “week” was with them as frequently applied to a term of seven years as it is with us to a period of seven days. Indeed, with respect to Daniel, the term “week” was used definitively to mark out a period of seven years; and when employed to designate any other term, its meaning was defined by the addition of explanatory words. Hence we find in Daniel x. 2, where the prophet wished to express a period of seven days, he uses the phrase, “weeks of days,” as the margin literally translates it. The term specified by the prophet is therefore seven weeks of years, each of those weeks consisting of seven years, amounting in the whole to four hundred and ninety years. The commission or edict of Artaxerxes, which enabled Ezra to carry into effect the restoration of Jerusalem, was issued in the month Nisan, in the 4256th year of the Julian period, from which if we descend four hundred and ninety years, we are brought to the month Nisan, *anno mundi* 4746, the very month and year of our Lord’s crucifixion. Here is a clear and complete fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy.

The place of the Saviour’s birth was as plainly predicted, as was the period when he would appear, in Micah v. 2; and it was also exactly fulfilled. Indeed, we might go into an almost endless detail of the numerous predictions relating to the person, character, miracles, sufferings, resurrection, ascension, and spiritual reign of Christ; all of which were in his history verified to the letter. But our limits allow only a passing reference to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy, which contains a glowing painting of Christ and his passion that was completely fulfilled in his sufferings and death.

IV. We proceed to notice the last section of the evidence which prophecy affords to the inspiration of the scriptures, by

a brief reference to the predictions of Christ and his apostles. Here, too, our limits will allow us only to enumerate two or three of the more prominent classes. Jesus Christ foretold his own death, and the peculiar circumstances with which it would be connected: Matt. xvi. 21; Mark x. 33, 34; Matt. xx. 18, 19; Mark xiv. 30. All these will be found to be exactly fulfilled in the arrest, the pretended trial, the cruel treatment, and the ignominious death, of our Saviour. The resurrection of Christ, the day on which it would take place, and the district to which he would afterward go, were also predictively specified: Matt. xvi. 21; xxvi. 32. The advent of the Holy Ghost, and the city in which he should descend, were also prophetically announced in Luke xxiv. 49; Mark xvi. 17, 18. The opening chapters of the Acts of the Apostles afford abundant proof of the fulfilment of these predictions. The destruction of Jerusalem, and of the temple of which the Jews were so proud, was also declared by Christ in Matt. xxiv. 2—35; Mark xiii. 2—31. This was also exactly accomplished; and the events connected therewith are as prominently set forth in the page of history as any circumstances can be. Finally: it was foretold that the presence and power of Christ should so manifestly attend on the preaching of the apostles, as that wonderful signs should accompany their ministrations, and a permanent church maintained in despite of the most violent opposition: Matt. xxviii. 18—20; Mark xvi. 15—18; Matt. xvi. 18. It may be safely averred, that no future events could appear more unlikely than these. Here is a man, about to perish as a malefactor. He is, it is true, surrounded by a few friends; but they are poor, powerless, and ignorant. Yet he predicts, that, soon after his death, they should receive power from on high; that they should afterward work signs and miracles; and that, although they were taught to use no means but a simple proclamation of truths the most unpalatable to the great and the wise, their cause should prosper, prevail, and fill the world. Yet, as far as the developements of the world's history have yet gone, all this is verified. The church of Christ was raised by apostolic preaching and apostolic miracles. Kings, lawgivers, and philosophers raged against it: Christians suffered, and martyrs bled. Yet the church grew and prevailed; and to this day

“Immovably founded in grace,  
She stands as she ever has stood;  
And brightly her Builder displays,  
And flames with the glory of God.”

As it is utterly impossible, that any combination of human sagacity could have contrived such a perfectly accurate detail of so many contingent events, so many years and (in some cases) ages before they occurred, so the publication and perfect accomplishment of these prophecies afford an undoubted proof, that the scriptures which contain them were dictated and inspired by the prescient Spirit of God.

Although particular stress is justly laid on miracles and prophecy, as authenticating the Divine inspiration of the sacred record, yet there are, as we have intimated, other evidences of a very important and conclusive character. We will notice, as the first of these, the doctrines and moral precepts of the Bible. Our limits will allow us to call attention to only a few prominent points, which the reader is requested to study and fill up at his leisure. Notice, first, the doctrines of the Old Testament. Observe the emphatic promulgation of God's first truth,—the Divine unity. (Deut. vi. 4; iv. 39.) The self-existence of this Deity. (Exod. iii. 14; Deut. x. 17; Exod. xv. 11.) He is the eternal and everlasting God. (Gen. xxi. 33; Deut. xxxiii. 27.) He is the judge of all the earth. (Deut. x. 17.) He is holy. (Lev. xix. 2.) Faithful. (Deut. vii. 9.) He is the true God. (Jer. x. 10.) He is immutable. (Mal. iii. 6; Psalm cii. 26, 27.) Omnipresent. (Jer. xxiii. 23, 24; Psalm cxxxix. 3.) A prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. (Psalm cxlv. 18, 19.) Merciful. (Isai. lv. 7; Micah vii. 18.) He is just and righteous. (Nahum i. 3; Psalm xciv. 1; Prov. xxiv. 12; Psalm cxix. 137.) These texts might be multiplied: but where, in all the world of Heathenism, can you find such a description of the Divine character? Nothing of the kind can be found.

The reasonableness and purity of Old-Testament precepts are equally confirmatory of this Divine origin of holy scripture. The love of God is enjoined. (Deut. xiii. 4, 5; Joshua xxiii. 11; Psalm xxxi. 23.) The fear of God leading to obedience required. (Eccles. xii. 13.) The necessity of sincerity and purity. (Psalm li. 17.) Not only is this pure and sublime morality taught, it is exhibited as actually experienced: Abraham, Isaac, and the elders are represented as fearing God; (Gen. xxii. 12; xxxi. 42; xlii. 18;) believing in him, trusting in his promises, and obeying his voice. (xv. 6; xxii. 18; xxvi. 5.) Such also was the experience of the Psalmist. (lvi. 4; lxii. 5.) Resignation to the will of God is exemplified. (Job i. 21; ii. 10.) These are but a very few instances out of many; but they sufficiently indicate the pure, spiritual, and effective teaching of the Old



Testament. Our space prevents us from doing more than simply observing, that the value of this evidence might be greatly enhanced by a reference to the teaching of these scriptures respecting a future state, the promised Redeemer, and the moral code of the Hebrews.

We have now to notice the doctrines and precepts of the New Testament as an evidence of its inspiration. Here we must give precedence to the character of Christ. On this subject the language of eulogy is out of place. The mind, temper, and entire demeanour of Jesus are, by every right-minded observer, felt to be Divine. Friends and foes have all united in the testimony of those who heard and saw him: "Never man spake as this man." "No man can do the works that thou doest except God be with him." Our brief review of the doctrines of the New Testament must mainly refer to the grand object of the new-covenant dispensation; namely, the means of a sinner's restoration to the favour of God. This is not done by any of the means suggested by human ingenuity. God is not represented as ignorant or careless of the morals of mankind; on the contrary, he is called the *holy Father*. (John xvii. 11.) The Son is *He that is holy*; (Rev. iii. 7;) and the Holy One of God. (Mark i. 24.) The Divine Spirit is emphatically and constantly termed the Holy Ghost. (Matt. i. 18; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33.) And the Triune Jehovah is the thrice Holy Lord God Almighty. (Rev. iv. 8.) And consequently God is represented as removed to an infinite distance from sinful man, who, in his state of enmity and alienation, is the object of his wrath and condemnation. (Eph. ii. 13; John iii. 36; Eph. v. 6; Col. iii. 6.) In accordance with these statements, the future punishment of impenitent sinners is described as being certain and infinite. (James i. 15; 1 John iii. 8; Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41, 46; Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.) Yet from all this depth of sin and danger, salvation is provided in Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. xv. 3; Titus ii. 14; Rom. iv. 25; Heb. ii. 9; 1 John iv. 10; Acts xx. 28; Eph. i. 7; Rev. v. 9.) This redemption is represented as efficacious in the removal of sin. (Matt. xxvi. 28; Acts xiii. 38; Eph. i. 7.) Consequently, penitent sinners, believing in Christ, are pardoned and reconciled to God; (Acts xiii. 39; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Rom. iii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 18, 21; Eph. i. 6;) are sanctified to God; (Heb. x. 10; 1 Cor. vi. 19; Titus iii. 5;) and are finally saved from eternal death unto eternal life. (John iii. 16; 1 Thess. i. 10; Rom. v. 9; vi. 23; 1 John v. 11; Acts iv. 12.) These doctrines, when fairly considered in their purity, harmony, adaptation to the circumstances of man, and in their

accordance with the wisdom, justice, and love of God, will be found such as never could have been contrived by man, much less by wicked men. But if they were not so contrived, they are the work of God, and therefore glorious proofs of the Divine inspiration of the sacred records.

The Divine inspiration of the Bible may be further argued from the wonderful harmony and connexion which is found to exist between the several books of which it is composed.

If our limits would allow, this might be very easily shown to present one of the most astonishing features, which even the Bible presents to our view. Here we have many separate and distinct literary productions, written by different persons, in distant countries, stretching over a period of sixteen hundred years. Yet although in the authors of these books may be perceived a great difference of character, education, and external circumstances, we find their productions making one harmonious whole. The history, poetry, philosophy, ethics, narratives, and epistles, —all combine into one object and end; and present to us no contradiction, scarcely even a discrepancy. In the exercise of merely human ingenuity, this could not have occurred.

The marvellous preservation of the books of scripture is another proof of their Divine inspiration. Here we have the Old-Testament scriptures all written prior to the year 400 B. C.; and yet they are preserved in all their integrity to our day. To see the full effect of this marvel, look at the fate of literary remains in the surrounding countries. Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia, Phenicia, Tyre, Egypt, and Carthage were all learned and powerful states, which flourished during a very long period. That they had a varied literature, we know; since fragments of it have come down to us. Yet it is remarkable, that in no case has any thing but fragmentary matter been saved; not one single entire book of any nation, or of any kind, has outlived the destruction of those mighty empires. A learned scholar, now removed by death, recently exerted himself most zealously to collect all the authentic literary remains of these several countries and kingdoms; and he gave them to the world in two languages in two hundred and eighty octavo pages. So that in little more than one hundred pages, in which each of those sets of fragments is comprised, you may read all that remains of the literary treasures of the whole of those countries. But in Palestine, located in the midst of these nations, and, with its people exposed to all the vicissitudes to which others were subjected, we have the Old-Testament books, written during a period of twelve hundred years, preserved

in all their purity and completeness. Does not this manifestly display the finger of God?

The adaptation of the scriptures to promote the best interests of mankind, and the superiority of the gospel-scheme over every other religion known among men, might be urged as additional proof; but we cannot further extend evidence in support of a position which, I am sure you will admit, has been abundantly established. On the contrary, I have no doubt, that, with me, you are prepared to bless God that we have such varied, complete, and convincing proofs, that the Bible is indeed the inspired truth of God, given by the Holy Ghost through holy men for the manifestation of his will to mankind.

We have only briefly to add, that this holy record is a full, sufficient, and perfect rule of faith and morals.

This follows from what has been previously established. It is the great purpose, and in fact the only one, for which its Divine inspiration is so clearly and fully authenticated. If it had been the intention of God to rear up any other, or a higher, standard of truth, such demonstrative evidence of Divine origin would have been better employed in attesting the authority of that higher standard. But it is not so. The ministers of Christ, whilst urging on their hearers these holy truths, should be reverently heard, and regarded as the ambassadors of Christ. But no man has a right to place his decision in contradiction to the plain teaching of the Bible: for no man can give such proof of his inspiration and authority to propound the Divine will, as the Bible itself affords. The Papists are therefore in this course condemned by reason, as they are also by scripture.

In reference to all these kinds we may, with some modification, adopt what St. Paul says of one of those "spiritual gifts" which were objects of "desire" to the early disciples: "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but *to them that believe not.*" The preceding evidences, too, are not without interest to yourselves, but are far more useful and important to "the ignorant and to them who are out of the way;" "with whom," like the compassionate High Priest of your profession, "you can reasonably bear," as the margin reads. (Heb. v. 2.) They also occupy a considerable place in that "sound doctrine" by which you "may be able both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers;" (Titus i. 9;) and they are subjects with which the carnal mind considers itself capable of grappling.

But there is another kind, to which we may apply the concluding words of St. Paul: "Prophesying serveth not for



them that believe not, but *for them who believe.*" (1 Cor. xiv. 22.) It is the weighty evidence of every Christian's personal experience. To those who "have obtained like precious faith with yourselves," you may always speak with freedom of "the deep things of God;" but they are topics which "the natural man" cannot entertain: "for they are foolishness unto him; *neither can he know them*, because they are to be spiritually discerned." Concerning the occasional introduction of these into your discourses, you must be governed by the caution of our Divine Legislator: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." After a man is deeply convinced of the sinfulness of his nature, he is led by the Good Spirit to "search the scriptures" for "everlasting life," and soon obtains the fulfilment of that promise: "If any man will do the will of him that sent me, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." (John vii. 16, 17.) He finds that "God hath set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 25, 26.) On this "propitiation" he is induced believingly to rely for salvation. "Confessing with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believing in his heart that God hath raised him from the dead," he enters at once on a course of holiness, happiness, and salvation. You, my dear brethren, have all passed through this process, and can recollect the time when you addressed your fervent thanksgivings to the Saviour of men, in the words of the poet,—

"To me, with thy dear Name, are given  
Pardon, and holiness, and heaven."

Pursuing this study of the holy scriptures, you went on your way rejoicing, and were soon enabled to add your hearty testimony to that of David, in commendation of them: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." (Psalm xix. 7—11.)

You found them most admirably suited to all the varying circumstances of your lives, and to the fluctuations of feeling in your renewed hearts. From your own experience, you discovered, that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 15—17.) You found this "word of God's grace able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified." (Acts xx. 32.) And now, enjoying the favour of God, you find your heaven on earth begun. You are enabled to "rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks." Thus, in corroboration of the other unanswerable arguments for the truth of the Divine records, you have the convincing evidence of your own consciousness that they are adapted to all the wants of sinful human nature. Viewing the whole range of Divine evidences in favour of Christianity, you may gladly declare, with our Christian poet, concerning both the Saviour and his holy word:—

"Salvation in that Name is found,  
Balm of my grief and care,—  
A medicine for my every wound:  
All, all I want is there."

Here, then, my brethren, is our fountain, our storehouse, our teacher. Let us "search the scriptures:" "in them we have eternal life:" they can "make us wise to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Let us not be satisfied with selecting a portion from these sacred pages, in order to make it a peg on which to hang a series of our own thoughts, or a centre around which to collect a certain amount of our judgment and research. Let us rather so fully enter into the teaching, spirit, and object of these sacred pages, that we may richly embody biblical truth in all our discourses, use its motives as our arguments, and diligently labour to carry into accomplishment its purposes of mercy in the salvation of men.

We must here close the present address. Our next effort will be to endeavour to afford you some information respecting the several books of which the Bible is composed, their authors, their scope, and object. Meanwhile, let me commend this desultory attempt to establish the integrity and Divine inspiration of the books of scripture to your earnest and prayerful consideration.

## LECTURE III.

### THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

**INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS** on the Importance of scriptural Truth, and the Division of the Bible—Importance of the Pentateuch—The Character of Moses—His Wisdom and Piety—**THE PENTATEUCH**—**GENESIS**: Its Outline of general History—A more particular Account of Abraham, his Call and Character, and a History of his Family and immediate Descendants—A general View of the Book of Genesis—**EXODUS**: The Persecution of Israel—The Plagues and the Exodus—The Journey to Sinai—The Law promulged—**LEVITICUS**: Laws respecting Sacrifices—The Priesthood—Purifications—Sacred Festivals, Vows, &c.—**NUMBERS**: The First Census—Legal Ceremonies—History of Hebrew Murmuring—Second Census, &c.—**DEUTERONOMY**: Peculiar Character of this Book—Brief Review of past History—Rapid Recital of Law—Explained and enforced in Detail—Rewards and Punishments announced—Personal History of Moses until his Death—**OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORICAL BOOKS**—**JOSHUA**: The Author of this Book—The Conquest of Canaan, and its Division among the Hebrews—Death of Joshua—**JUDGES**: A Narrative of the several Defections of Israel—Their Punishments and Deliverances—The Introduction of Idolatry by Micah—The War with Benjamin—**RUTH**: Case of Naomi—Marriage of Ruth—Birth of Obed, the Father of Jesse—**FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL**: Birth of Samuel—Death of Eli—The Government of Samuel—Reign of Saul—**SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL**: Reign of David—His Conquests—His Sin and Punishment—He suppresses the Rebellion of Absalom—His Piety and Prosperity to the End—**FIRST BOOK OF KINGS**: General Observations—The Reign of Solomon—His Successors to Jehoshaphat—Collateral History of the Kingdom of Israel—**SECOND BOOK OF KINGS**: History of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel until the Ruin of Israel—The History of Judah until the Destruction of Jerusalem—**FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES**—Genealogical Tables—Reigns of Saul and David—**SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES**: The Reign of Solomon—Of his Successors on the Throne of Judah—**EZRA**: History of the Jews at Jerusalem from Zerubbabel to Ezra—Arrival of Ezra—His Efforts and Success—**NEHEMIAH**: Observations respecting him—Narrative of his Appointment—The Walls of Jerusalem built—His Efforts, in Conjunction with Ezra, to reform the People—His second Reformation—**ESTHER**: her Elevation to the Throne—The Plot of Haman defeated—The Jews saved—**CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS**.

In the last discourse, I endeavoured to prove, that the books composing the Bible are genuine and authentic productions; which owe their origin, not to human effort or ingenuity, but to the inspiration of the Spirit of God, who operated on the minds of holy men of old, and they wrote as they were thus moved by him; and that, consequently, these holy records are to be regarded as the only authoritative standard of religious and



moral truth, and constitute a sure and sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Having fully satisfied our minds on this head, we approach the study of holy scripture, not only with great reverence, but with the liveliest concern. Here we have an exposition of the character, the mind, and the will of God; not elicited by the efforts of human investigation and induction, but by direct revelation from the Most High. Nor can we enter on this study as if it referred merely to grand but abstract truths: on the contrary, we never rightly appreciate its character, unless we regard it as a revelation of the mind of God to us for our individual advantage. The information is given to us for our instruction; the commands and precepts are enjoined on us for the regulation of our conduct, and the promises are direct offers of grace from heaven to our hearts. In fact, we have the deepest concern in all these revelations, and should therefore always study them as a man would the title-deeds of his own estate. Yet, whilst possessing this strong hold on our individual interests, the importance of the sacred record is enhanced by the fact, that it involves the destiny of the whole human race. Men rise into elevation, power, and happiness, as they know and obey this word of salvation; or sink into abasement, ignorance, and ruin, as they are strangers to its Divine teaching, or disobedient to its pure and spiritual injunctions.

This study, therefore, must be conducted with the most reverential disposition of heart; and is, at the same time, calculated to excite the deepest interest and the highest hopes in the human mind. In this manner we direct our attention to the holy Bible, and find it not merely divided into two great parts or sections, one originally written in Hebrew, called "the Old Testament;" and the other in Greek, and called "the New Testament;" but that each of these parts is composed of a series of separate tracts or productions called "Books." This division, it may also be observed, is not arbitrary or fanciful, or such as takes place with an author merely for the sake of arrangement. On the contrary, many of the books of holy scripture were written at different times, by different persons, for the accomplishment of various immediate purposes: yet all these circumstances have been so fully subjected to the Divine will, and overruled by the Holy Spirit, that these various productions make one combined and harmonious whole,—one complete magazine of Divine knowledge and instruction for the human family.

In order, however, to our rightly apprehending, to the fullest

extent, the scope and meaning of these holy revelations, we must pay particular attention to the peculiar character and objects of these several books, endeavour to ascertain their respective authors, and the circumstances and design for which they were written ; and to form a competent opinion of their more remarkable peculiarities and general contents. This will be the object of the present and of the two succeeding lectures. The books of the New Testament may be considered in one lecture. The Old Testament is naturally divisible into two great sections,—the historical, and the poetical and prophetical books. This arrangement shall therefore be adopted ; and our attention in the present discourse will be directed to the analysis of the Pentateuch and the other historical books of the Old Testament.

In the prosecution of this task, we are first presented with the writings of Moses. From their magnitude, constituting, as they do, nearly one-fifth of the entire scriptures, as well as from their importance, in communicating to us the only authentic account we have of creation and of the history of the world during the first three thousand years of its history, and introducing to us an acquaintance with the origin, object, and nature of the Hebrew theocracy—these can scarcely be over-estimated by the biblical student. Our first attention shall be directed to the inspired author of these ancient books.

Moses was the son of Amram and Jochebed, both of the tribe of Levi, and was born during the heat of the persecution which was carried on against the Hebrew settlers in Goshen by the reigning Pharaoh of Egypt. It is a remarkable fact, that the name of this great man should perpetuate throughout all time a significant memorial of his deliverance from the destruction to which the infamous decree of the tyrant had consigned all the male infants of the Hebrew race. “It was the intention of Divine Providence,” observes an eminent author, “that the great and wonderful destiny of the child should be from the first apparent : and what the Lord had done for Moses, he intended also to accomplish for the whole nation of Israel.” Preserved in this remarkable manner, and brought up at Pharaoh’s court, he received an education suitable to the rank into which he had been adopted ; and under this culture his great natural endowments were developed, and he became, as we are informed, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Forty years of the early part of the life of such a man as Moses, employed under circumstances so favourable for the attainment

of knowledge, would do much to give to the powers of his mind the fullest strength and maturity. But, although a careful recognition of his advantageous position is quite proper, and may lead us more clearly to understand and account for some remarkable features in the character of the Hebrew legislator; the learning of Moses is not the only, nor even the principal, excellence which he displayed throughout his public life. Moses was pre-eminently a holy man. It is indeed a most remarkable circumstance, that, notwithstanding his Egyptian education, he seems, of all the men of his day, to have most clearly apprehended the ultimate issue of redeeming love in the salvation of man. The manner in which St. Paul, writing under the plenary influence of the Holy Spirit, speaks of the views and motives which influenced the conduct of Moses, is most remarkable: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." (Heb. xi. 24—29.)

Under the full conviction, expressed in the preceding lecture, of the certain inspiration of holy scripture, we must receive this passage as giving a clear and truthful account of the views and motives which influenced Moses in his choice. We therefore see that the ruling principle of his conduct was faith in God; a faith which fully realised the certain accomplishment of the Divine promise and purpose, and led to a corresponding course of action. This faith, the words of St. Paul lead us to believe, actually embraced the completion of the scheme of redemption in the work and sufferings of Christ, and consequently identified all the preliminary means to its accomplishment, with the ultimate and glorious reward which the pious would receive through the efficacy of his mediation. Moses was, therefore, not only a wise, but a holy, man; one who fully renounced sin, and devoted himself to the Divine will by a long and uninterrupted course of self-denying exertion. But, great and good as Moses proved himself to be, whilst engaged, under God, in leading the Hebrews out of Egypt, conducting them through the wilderness, and rearing up



the whole fabric of their civil and ecclesiastical institutions, it is to the Pentateuch that we are to look for the greatest monument of his wisdom and piety.

It does not appear that Moses divided his work into five books, or that such division was ever recognised by the ancient Jews: they generally called it "the law," or "the law of Moses." And as the term *Pentateuch*, literally, "five books," as well as our names of "Genesis," "Exodus," "Leviticus," "Numbers," and "Deuteronomy," all evidently come from the Greek, it can scarcely be doubted that the division and the names of the several books were given by the first translators of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek. This surmise is strongly supported by the fact, that Josephus, who wrote during the apostolic period, speaks of the five books of Moses; while, in the Jewish manuscripts, the Pentateuch to this day forms but one roll or book.

The authorship of this portion of holy scripture is not left to be established by induction, or any indirect evidence: it is distinctly asserted. From Exodus xvii. 14, we learn that Moses was commanded to write an account of the defeat of Amalek *in a book*. This mode of expression clearly proves that the record of this conflict and victory was only intended to form one element of a lengthened account, with which the reader is supposed to be acquainted. On several other occasions Moses alludes to his composition of a narrative of events, and of sacred and civil institutions. (Exod. xxiv. 4, 7; xxxiv. 27, 28; Num. xxxiii. 2; Deut. x. 4; xxviii. 58.) Moses is indeed asserted to be the author of the whole work. (Deut. xxxi. 9, 24.)

Various objections have been urged against the Pentateuch as the work of Moses. Most of these are so puerile as to be unworthy of serious notice: such as its speaking of Moses in the third person; its containing portions of more ancient writings; and the supposed infancy of the art of writing at this time. Of the first, it is sufficient to say, that later scripture writers do the same thing, as well as the most eminent profane authors; such as Xenophon and Cæsar. Respecting the second, nothing is more certain than that Moses, if he found pre-existing records or genealogical tables, which he knew to be true, might have incorporated them into his history, without any impeachment of its genuineness. In this case, the plenary inspiration under which he wrote would teach him to include nothing but what was perfectly true, so that the inspired authority of the matter so selected would be the same

as that of the original composition. There was a time, when the third objection was paraded with great force. But the rapid increase of knowledge respecting the early history of the world during the past half century, has completely set it aside. The unfounded notion that letters were unknown before the time of Moses, which obtained so generally in former ages, is now scarcely maintained by any well-informed person. Indeed, the presumption is, that letters and learning have been in use from the beginning.

Our further investigation of the Mosaic writings will be directed to an analysis of the several books.

The first Book of Moses is called **GENESIS**. This is the term applied to this portion of scripture in the Septuagint: it means, "the book of the generation" or "production," an appellation given to it on account of its containing a history of the origin of all things, and an outline of the earliest history of the world. It is clearly divisible into two main parts; one being of a general kind, the other directed to a special and limited purpose. The first part is contained in chapters i.—xi., and gives an account of creation, and an outline of the history and religion of the human race from the creation to the days of Abraham. The second part, which occupies the remainder of the book, is charged with the communication of the history of the progenitors of the Hebrew nation. These parts, however, naturally combine into one harmonious whole, as the chief aim which pervades the work is to show how the theocratic government, subsequently founded by Moses, was rendered possible and necessary. The book, therefore, takes its starting-point from the primeval unity of the human race, and their original relation to God; and proceeds thence to the interruption of that relation by the appearance of sin, which gradually and progressively wrought an external and internal division of the human family.

Proceeding onward from the historical detail of this great defection from God, and all its accompanying circumstances and consequences, we have a brief and general account of the progressive rebellion of the world against its Lord, until it was filled with violence, and prepared, by a consummation of its guilt, for judicial destruction. In this rapid sketch of primitive history, there are a few facts which stand out so prominently that they require a passing notice. It should be remarked, that, after the sin of our first parents, the next transgression recorded as having taken place is that which is generally

regarded as of the highest turpitude,—murder; and *that* the murder of a brother. How clearly this proves that mankind were not schooled into crime through successive ages of deterioration! On the contrary, human nature had no sooner become alienated from God by wicked works, than it was prepared to plunge into the deepest abyss of moral impurity. This disposition to violence continued with the progressive increase of population, until the earth was filled with its crimes. There was, however, one peculiar developement of this brutal spirit which is noticed by the sacred writer, and which deserves especial attention as having tended in an eminent degree to fill up the cup of iniquity of the old world—I allude to the forcible seizure of women for the gratification of the lustful desires of great and powerful men.

Lamech led the way in this career of iniquity, by violating the primitive law of the Creator, and introducing into the world all the moral evil and fearful consequences of polygamy; and was, for this crime, thought to be exposed to the punishment apprehended by the first murderer. (Gen. iv. 23, 24.) As the numbers of mankind increased, the same sin was repeated, especially by the sons of the great, powerful, and mighty men. These “saw the daughters” of meaner persons, “that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.” (Gen. vi. 2.) Their unbridled desires were let loose; they put no limit to their violence and lust; and this lewdness became so general, that “the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man;”\* and the general deluge was in consequence appointed. These evils were probably aggravated by the continuance of the whole antediluvian population as one undivided community.

The deluge is clearly placed before us as not only a great miracle, or rather a series of the most stupendous miracles; it is also plainly described as the result of the Divine judgment against sin; and in each aspect this terrible infliction stands out as an event worthy of deep and serious inquiry by the student of holy scripture.

Following the general history of Moses into the postdiluvian world, we are first impressed with the merciful interposition of God toward this second human family, in his gracious covenant with Noah, and the revelation of his promise, sealed as it was by the rainbow-sign, that the world should be no more destroyed by water. We next obtain from this account,

\* See this view of these scriptures critically explained and supported in my “Sacred Annals,” vol. i. page 193, *et seq.*



intimations which, considered in connexion with other scriptures, place it beyond a doubt that, after the flood, it was divinely appointed that, as soon as a sufficient population was produced, the several tribes should separate, under the direction of their patriarchal chiefs, and occupy the different parts of the globe; that, by this means, the fearful moral deterioration which occurred in the antediluvian world might be avoided. We are with equal brevity informed that an attempt was made, by a great confederacy and rebellion, to resist this divinely-appointed dispersion, and that this attempt was defeated, and the dispersion enforced, by the miraculous confusion of tongues at Babel. We are by these means made acquainted with the origin of all the great primitive nations, and can easily trace up most of these to that branch of Noah's family from which it descended.

Our limits forbid further remark on this period of the history; but it must not escape observation, that, if the Mosaic narrative is true, then it follows, that humanity began its career in immediate union, fellowship, and converse with God; that these glorious privileges were forfeited by sin; but that, through the announcement of a promised Redeemer, a way of faith was opened to man, by which he was again permitted to have access to God, and to know and to do his will. Men of science and philosophy may labour by inductions to explain away or to mystify these essential facts; but we can never too clearly apprehend them, or too earnestly insist upon them. They lie at the foundation of our faith, and must be received by all who hold the certain verity of God's revelation to man.

The paramount importance of the events recorded in the early part of the Book of Genesis has justified a lengthened exposition; in respect of the other portion, we must be more brief.

This section of the book contains a history of the patriarchal church. It begins with an account of the call of Abraham: (chap. xi. :) the announcement that in him "all the families of the earth" should be blessed: (chap. xii. :) his journeying with Lot, and their separation: (chap. xiii. :) the war of the Pentapolis: (chap. xiv. :) the personal history of Abraham continued, with further revelations and promises made to him as the progenitor of the Messiah—circumcision instituted: (chap. xv.—xvii. :) the appearance of the Lord, accompanied by two angels, to Abraham—his intercession for Sodom, and its ruin—the preservation of Lot and his daughters: (chap. xviii., xix. :) the further history of Abraham—birth of Isaac—Abraham's

trial—death of Sarah—arrangements for the marriage of Isaac : (chap. xx.—xxv. :) the history of Isaac, and birth of his two sons : (chap. xxvi. :) Jacob and Esau : (chap. xxvii. :) the history of Jacob : (chap. xxviii.—xxxv. :) the descendants of Esau : (chap. xxxvi. :) the history of Jacob resumed—Joseph sold into Egypt—incest of Judah—the sufferings and elevation of Joseph—his interviews with his brethren—he makes himself known to them—Jacob goes down into Egypt : (chap. xxxvii.—xlvi. :) the prophecies, death, and burial of Jacob—the death of Joseph—his faith. (Chap. xlviii.—l.)

If it were necessary to notice the objections which have been made to the authenticity of this book, it might easily be shown, that its truthful character cannot be impugned with any hope of success. It is, in fact, so frequently referred to in the subsequent books of scripture, that it stands sustained by all the evidence which proves the truth of the sacred volume. The objections which have been so ingeniously urged against it by many learned and sceptical authors are little more than mere cavil, and admit of an easy and satisfactory solution.

Nor can any thing be more absurd than the far-fetched efforts which have been put forth to show that an important portion of this book is allegorical, mythological, or unhistorical in its character. For these suppositions there is not the slightest ground. On the contrary, the Book of Genesis is strictly historical and religious. If, occasionally, its writer departs from strict historical statement, it is to communicate some important religious truth. It is, in fact, a glorious revelation of the origin of all things ; of man's primitive history ; the early corruption of manners and disorganisation of society ; the deluge ; the rebellion of Nimrod ; the miraculous confusion of tongues, and consequent dispersion ; the progenitors of the great primitive nations ; and the foundation laid in patriarchal history for the Hebrew theocracy, and the ultimate redemption of mankind. These subjects here pass under our review, in language at once simple and sublime, and with an authoritative truthfulness which must be appreciated by every honest and serious reader. In fact, he who has been taught to read this book with attention will know more of the interesting and important elements of man's primitive history, than all the sages of the ancient Heathen world possessed.

Besides these important elements of instruction, the Book of Genesis is invaluable for affording information respecting the age of the world, and that period of time when human history began. The chronology of the Book of Genesis is a most

important portion of the teaching of this part of sacred scripture, and deserves the most serious attention. But this subject is beset with difficulties proportioned to its importance. We have the Pentateuch in three versions which have been handed down to us from very ancient times. They are, 1. The Samaritan version, which was anciently used by the people whose name it bears: 2. The Hebrew: and, 3. The Septuagint or Greek version, which was translated from the Hebrew in Egypt about the year B.C. 280, and was at the time declared by the Jews to be a perfect rendering of their own scriptures. Besides these ancient copies of scripture, we have a Hebrew chronology in the writings of Josephus. The following Tables give the chronology of this period according to these authorities.

TABLE, No. 1.

## THE GENERATIONS OF THE ANTEDILUVIAN PATRIARCHS.

	Lived before the Birth of eldest Son.				After the Birth of the eldest Son.				Total Length of Life.			
	Heb.	Sam.	Sep.	Jos.	Heb.	Sam.	Sep.	Jos.	Heb.	Sam.	Sep.	Jos.
Adam .....	130	130	230	230	800	800	700	700	930	930	930	930
Seth .....	105	105	205	205	807	807	707	707	912	912	912	912
Enos .....	90	90	190	190	815	815	715	715	905	905	905	905
Cainan .....	70	70	170	170	840	840	740	740	910	910	910	910
Mahalaleel .....	65	65	165	165	830	830	730	730	895	895	895	895
Jared .....	162	62	162	162	800	785	800	800	962	847	962	962
Enoch .....	65	65	165	165	300	300	200	200	365	365	365	365
Methuselah .....	187	67	187	187	782	653	782	782	969	720	969	969
Lamech .....	182	53	188	182	595	600	565	595	777	653	753	777
Noah at the Flood .....	600	600	600	600								
To the Flood .....	1656	1307	2262	2256								

TABLE, No. 2.

## THE GENERATIONS OF THE POSTDILUVIAN PATRIARCHS.

	Lived before the Birth of eldest Son.				After the birth of the eldest Son.			Total Length of Life.		
	Heb.	Sam.	Sep.	Jos.	Heb.	Sam.	Sep.	Heb.	Sam.	Sep.
Shem after the Flood .....	2	2	2	12	500	500	500	600	600	600
Arphaxad .....	35	135	135	135	403	303	403	438	438	538
Cainan .....			130				330			460
Salah .....	30	130	130	130	403	303	303	433	433	433
Eber .....	34	134	134	134	430	270	270	464	404	404
Peleg .....	30	130	130	130	209	109	209	239	239	339
Reu .....	32	132	132	130	207	107	207	239	239	339
Serug .....	30	130	130	132	200	100	200	230	230	330
Nahor .....	29	79	79	120	119	69	129	148	148	208
Terah .....	70	70	70	70	135	75	135	205	145	205
To birth of Abraham .....	292	942	1072	993						



From these Tables it appears that, according to the Hebrew, 1948 years elapsed from the creation to the birth of Abraham; whilst the Samaritan gives 2249, and the Septuagint 3334. Those who have the opportunity of consulting my "Sacred Annals," (vol. i. page 7, *et seq.*) will see my reasons for preferring the numbers of the Septuagint.

The second book of the Pentateuch is termed **EXODUS**, from the principal event which it narrates; namely, *the departure* of the Israelites from Egypt. That it was the production of Moses, is undoubted. It not only has all the evidence, in favour of this judgment, which pertains to the whole Pentateuch, but the personal conduct and character of the Hebrew lawgiver are so interwoven with the structure of the account, as to leave no room for any other idea of its origin.

This book begins to detail all that the Bible contains of the history of the Hebrew people. It must not, however, be regarded as an ordinary history of the origin of the Israelitish nation; for such it certainly is not. It contains, rather, a sketch of such portions of their actions, character, and progress, as were connected with, or resulted from, the interpositions of Jehovah on their behalf, and for the establishment of his theocratic government among them.

The book opens with an account of the persecution of the Israelites by the king of Egypt; and proceeds to state the birth of Moses, his adoption by the daughter of Pharaoh, his interference on behalf of his oppressed brethren, his flight into Midian, and his call by Jehovah to be the instrument of the deliverance of the children of Israel. This section extends from the first to the sixth chapter. It is very clear, that the whole of this part of the narrative is written so as to exhibit, with the utmost clearness and force, the fact, that the action of Moses in the government of Israel was not an instance of the influence of an energetic and powerful mind over inferior men, nor an ordinary case of the appointment of an eminent individual to the direction of public affairs; but a special and immediate selection, by God, of this person to the work to which he called him. It was, therefore, not the choice of Moses, nor his self-will,—not his great talents, nor his eminent ability,—which gave him his position; but the direct appointment of Jehovah. Thus the public life of Moses arose—not from the ordinary impulses and feelings which generally influence national leaders, but—from a continued pious obedience to God. We shall never clearly apprehend the character of the

Hebrew lawgiver, nor the respect due to the institutions which he introduced, unless we fully recognise this Divine vocation, and the pious and devoted submission of this great man to the will of God.

The seventh chapter is a new section of the book, which extends to the fifteenth. This exhibits in detail God's controversy with the oppressors of his people, and more especially with the gods of Egypt. Here, indeed, begins the real history of the Israelites, as the elect people of Jehovah. Nothing can exceed the imposing grandeur of this scene. Here all the pride and power of an ancient and martial nation, sustained, to the utmost, by all those diabolical agencies which originated and continued to maintain Heathenism as a deep spiritual rebellion against God, are confronted, challenged, and prostrated, before the word of the true Lord of earth and heaven. Day after day the contest continues: at first the miracles of Moses are imitated; but this soon ceases, and Egypt bows under the successive strokes of Almighty Power, until at length, at the Passover, we see the annihilation of all worldly might and the helpless prostration of demon energy; whilst, on the other hand, as an eminent author has observed, "it is the celebration of the birth-day of the people of God." This section closes with a magnificent exultant ode, in celebration of the triumph of Israel over their foes.

As the account of the persecution of the Hebrews can only be regarded as introductory to the great subject of the book, we are brought to the second important section of its contents at the opening of the sixteenth chapter. Here the emancipated Hebrews begin their march under the direction of their divinely-appointed leader toward the land which had been promised to their fathers. In the early part of this journey, contained in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth chapters, the Lord evinces his care over his people, and his ability and willingness to protect and provide for them, by supplying them with manna and water, and by giving them the victory over the Amalekites, who fiercely assailed them whilst on their journey.

With the beginning of the nineteenth chapter the Divine legislation for Israel commences. The manner in which this economy is propounded deserves special attention. In four chapters (xix.—xxiii.) is detailed the intercourse between Moses and Jehovah in the mount, followed by a brief summary of the laws which were enjoined. The solemnity and splendour of the scene here presented to our view are without parallel. God comes down to legislate for his people; and every accompanying

circumstance attests the reality of his presence. After this sublime introduction, the Decalogue is announced, standing at the head of the whole code, as containing the germ of the entire course of legislation ; the further revelations of law being, in fact, developements of these ten commandments.

This summary of the Divine law having been promulgated upon it as the basis of their fealty and obedience, the people were called to enter into covenant with God. The manner in which this was done was particularly significant. The laws were written in a book, an altar was reared, a sacrifice offered, and Moses "took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people : and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." (Chap. xxiv. 7, 8.)

The people having thus entered into covenant with the Lord, Moses went up into the mount to receive, on their behalf, further revelations from God. These embodied the whole arrangements for the tabernacle, its service, and, in fact, every thing relating to this religious economy. The central-point of this system was the dwelling of God in the midst of his people as their Lord and their King. To what extent the symbols and elements of the patriarchal faith were incorporated into this system, cannot now be fully ascertained. It is, however, certain, that the cherubim stood as immediately connected with the Divine Presence in the tabernacle, as they did in Paradise ; that prior to the revelations of Sinai there existed amongst the Israelites a place which was regarded as the special seat of the Divine Presence ; (Exod. xvi. 33 ;) and that even in the time of Rebekah she could go "to inquire of the Lord," (Gen. xxv. 22,) and obtain an oracular reply. Now the declaratory and typical character of this wide range of symbolism is made complete. Here, in the holy of holies, where the impeaching law meets the blood of atonement, the Divine Presence rests, inhabiting the cherubim, and dispensing mercy to Israel through the appointed channel of the high priest. This is followed by a full description of the sacred sanctuary, symbolising those blessings which, through the most holy place, were to flow to the subjects of the theocracy, and which was intended to serve as a perpetual memorial of the exalted destiny of Israel, and of the means by which it was secured. The court is next described, exhibiting the participation of the people in those covenant blessings, and their sanctified approach to the



Lord. The Divine instructions then proceed to point out the priests who were to officiate in this sacred sanctuary, with their various costumes, (chap. xxviii.,) and the manner of their appointment; (chap. xxix.;) and then comes a minute account of the use and nature of the brass laver for sacred ablutions, the preparation of the perfume and anointing oil, and of other implements necessary for the service of the priests. (Chap. xxx.) Then we have the appointment of men specially endowed by the Spirit of God for constructing the sacred tabernacle and all its furniture. Thence follows an account of specially appointed holy periods and services. (Chap. xxxi.) These glorious revelations having proceeded thus far, and the tables of stone, written by the finger of God, having been given to Moses, the whole progress of this legislation was suspended by a gross act of defection from God, on the part of the Hebrews. Whilst Moses was detained in the mount, Aaron, at the instance of the people, made a golden calf, which they adored as the god that had brought them out of Egypt. The detail of this sin, which must be regarded as ominously prophetic of the future apostasy of the nation, and of its punishment, occupies two chapters. (xxxii., xxxiii.) The following chapters (xxxiv.—xl.) contain further revelations respecting law, and an account of the completion of the tabernacle, and of the manifestation of the Divine glory in connexion therewith.

This book is a most important portion of the Old-Testament canon. Its purely historical character is unquestionable. Its relation of the route taken by the Hebrews from Egypt through the desert has been confirmed and illustrated by all the researches of modern learning; whilst the grand revelation of the Divine Presence, confirmed and attested by those institutions which could only have risen up under such miraculous influence, are, in addition to other evidence, the surest guarantee that the physical miracles which it records were as real and as magnificent as they are stated to have been. The Book of Exodus, by its lucid and complete account of the establishment of the Hebrew theocracy, not only exhibits the broad and sterling basis of Old-Testament faith, but also casts glorious light on the whole scheme of redemption. The student who wishes fully to comprehend the glory and harmony of gospel truth, will do well to study, in the light of the New Testament, the typical institutions whose origin and character are here recorded.

LEVITICUS is the next section of the Pentateuch which

comes under our consideration. It contains the further statement and developement of the Sinaitic legislation.

Before proceeding to give an analysis of the contents of this book, it may be observed, that it is undoubtedly the production of Moses, and, what is of special consequence to remark, it is written in historical sequence. The several laws are therefore not presented to our view in any strict systematic arrangement, but in the chronological order in which they were revealed.

This book has been divided into four parts. The first includes seven chapters, (i.—vii.,) and contains the laws respecting sacrifices. These are of five different classes: 1. The burnt-offering, (Lev. i.,) which was typical of Christ's sacrifice for sin. (Heb. ix. 26; x. 14; 1 John i. 7.) 2. The meat-offering. (Lev. ii.) 3. The peace-offering, which seems to have a typical character of a two-fold nature: first, as prefiguring Christ's oblation of himself whereby he became our peace; (Eph. ii. 14—16; Acts xiii. 47; Heb. x. 9; ix. 28;) and, secondly, our oblation of praise and thanksgiving to God. 4. Offerings made for sins of ignorance, which, being consumed without the camp, set forth Christ's suffering "without the gate," that he might abolish the curse arising out of the primitive transgression; so that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Heb. xiii. 11—13; Rom. v. 19.) 5. The trespass-offering for sins knowingly committed, which typified the atonement made by Christ for the actual transgressions of all mankind. (Isai. liii. 10; 2 Cor. v. 21.)

The second part details the institution of the priesthood, and the appointment to this sacred office of Aaron and his sons. (Lev. viii.—x.) The essential feature of this priesthood was, that the priest was constituted a mediator between God and his people, and as such prefigured the mediatorial office of the great "High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. iii. 1.) As, in a former instance, the wickedness of the people was severely punished; so now the disobedience of some of the priests was visited with signal marks of the Divine anger, in the case of Nadab and Abihu.

The third part of this book contains laws concerning the purifications both of the priests and the people. (Lev. xi.—xxi.)

The regulations here laid down with respect to leprosy can scarcely be read without strongly impressing the mind, that they were designed to be allusive to the malignant and inveterate nature of sin. We have here, also, in the institution of the great day of atonement, a clear typical representation of the

atonement work of the Lord Jesus. (Heb. ix. 7—12, 24—26.) This feast, in fact, formed the central point of the national religion. By it the whole nation was annually brought into the Divine presence, as convicted and condemned on account of sin, and then as being pardoned, accepted, and blessed, through the atonement of the blood of sacrifice, so that the whole people were thus reconciled to God, and even the sanctuary itself purified. It was this, indeed, which gave effect to all the other sacrifices and purifications: here they all met and were made complete and efficacious. In the latter portion of this section (chap. xviii., xix.) we find various admonitions and laws which were given to the Israelites respecting the necessity of their avoiding the practices and manners of the Canaanites, when they should be brought into the possession of the promised land. The priests were specially enjoined to lead the nation, by their good example, to avoid every Pagan usage, and to maintain their body in purity and free from all blemish and mutilation.

The concluding part of the Book of Leviticus contains various laws concerning sacred festivals, vows, things devoted, and tithes. (Chap. xxii.—xxvii.)

The first of these chapters treats of the seven great festivals,—the sabbath, the passover, the feast of first-fruits, pentecost, the feast of trumpets, the great day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. In chap. xxiv. various ceremonial and judicial rites are enjoined. The following chapters contain a recapitulation of some laws previously given, and the promulgation of new regulations concerning vows, tithes, and things devoted, interspersed with prophetic promises and threatenings, which have been wonderfully fulfilled in the history of the Hebrews.

Before closing our notice of this book,—which there is reason to fear is too often regarded as part of an obsolete economy, and therefore frequently passed over without due attention by the Christian student,—we must call your serious consideration to the peculiar character of chapters xxv. and xxvi. These portions are undoubtedly prophetic, and are not only important, regarded simply in this aspect, but such communications also prove that the Jewish lawgiver had not merely an external aim in the promulgation of his code, but that his law had a deeper purpose and a more spiritual object than appeared on the surface of this ceremonial legislation; that, in fact, Moses understood, to a great extent, the true relation of his institutions to the general economy of redemption; and that, enlightened by the prescient Spirit of Jehovah, he saw far beyond his own day into the history and fate of the Hebrew people.



The **BOOK OF NUMBERS** is the fourth of the Pentateuch. Its name, in the Greek, Latin, and English versions, is taken from the prominence given to the narrative, contained in chapters i.—iii., of the numbering of the people of Israel. This section of the Mosaic writings continues an account of the Sinaitic legislation, and the history of the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness. The alternations of the writer from the revelation of law to the narrations of history, and thence, again, to the communication of the Divine purpose respecting the destiny of his people, followed, again, by further historical records of the Hebrews, have given this book the appearance of a compilation of several tracts; a circumstance which has induced some critics to endeavour to resolve it into separate fragments and documents; but this attempt has altogether failed. The scope, contents, and unity of the book will be seen from the following analysis.

The first part contains the census of the Israelites. This may be noticed under two heads: 1. The numbering of the twelve tribes, and the arrangement of them into regular order as a military camp. (Chap. i., ii.) 2. The sacred or ecclesiastical census of the Levites, their appointment to the holy office, and an account of their duties in the tabernacle. (Chap. iii., iv.)

This enumeration of the Israelites is not only important, as having furnished a substantial basis for preserving the certain genealogy of Messiah, and for keeping this people in a state of entire separation from their idolatrous neighbours; it also showed to them, as it does to us, the wonderful manner and extent to which the promises that God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, respecting the rapid multiplication of their posterity, had been fulfilled. Here, also, are introduced the laws respecting the redemption of the first-born, who are substituted by the Levites, in special consecration to God.

The second part contains the institution of various legal ceremonies; the purification of the camp by the removal from it of all persons ceremonially unclean, and the trial by the waters of jealousy: (chap. v. :) the institution of the Nazarite: (chap. vi. :) oblations made to the tabernacle: (chap. vii. :) the consecration of the Levites: (chap. viii. :) the celebration of the passover: (chap. ix. :) regulations respecting the camp during the journeyings of the people. (Chap. x.)

The third part contains a history of the progressions of the Israelites from Sinai to the plains of Moab, including the appointment and conduct of the spies, and the rebellion of the people on receiving their report.

This portion of the book has been usually divided into eight sections, after the several murmurings of the people.

The first of these took place at Taberah, on account of the length of the way; and was punished by a destructive fire. (Chap. xi. 1—3.) In the second instance, they complained that they loathed manna; when they were punished with a miraculous supply of quails, accompanied by a pestilence. (Verses 4—35.) This was followed by a singular instance of infidelity,—the murmuring of Aaron and Miriam against Moses; when Miriam was smitten with leprosy, and restored at the intercession of her brother. (Chap. xii.) The next case, the murmuring of the people at Kadesh-Barnea, may be justly considered as the turning-point of early Hebrew history. Hitherto they had been brought by the gracious provision and protection of God, their ecclesiastical economy was complete, and they had received so many proofs of the Lord's power to help and save them, that they were now in circumstances in which they should have been prepared to take possession of that good land which God had promised to their fathers. Between sixteen and seventeen months had elapsed since the host of Israel had left Egypt; they were now arrived at that part of the desert which bordered on Palestine, some distance to the south of Beersheba, when twelve chosen men, one from each tribe, were sent to journey through the country, and to bring back a report of the state and condition of the land and of its inhabitants. The spies were occupied during forty days in this exploration; after which they returned, bringing with them an immense cluster of grapes, as a sample of the fruits which the land produced, and assuring their brethren that it flowed with milk and honey; but they at the same time gave such a description of the giant stature of the inhabitants, of their walled cities and military power, that it produced a general conviction that attempts to subdue them would be utterly useless. It is true that Caleb and Joshua, two of the spies, faithfully resisted the statements and conclusion of their colleagues; but their efforts were unavailing. Indeed, so strangely and powerfully were the people excited, that these two faithful men scarcely escaped being stoned by the incensed multitude. This rebellion was stayed only by the appearance of the glory of the Lord in the door of the tabernacle, when he declared his purpose that, in consequence of their sin, the whole of the adult population of Israel, excepting only Caleb and Joshua, should die in the wilderness, but that their children should enter into the promised land. So fearfully was the

Lord's purpose frustrated respecting his elect people, that they whom he had taught, and trained, and borne as on eagles' wings, perished in the wilderness. In consequence of this Divine appointment, the course of march was changed, and the host of Israel passed on toward the south, leaving the mountain-ridge of Edom on their right hand. But, as if to revive their desponding hope, and to encourage their faith in God, this measure is immediately followed by a revelation of certain laws which were to come into operation when Israel had taken possession of Palestine. (Chap. xv.)

The fifth case of defection is that occasioned by the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram ; with their punishment. (Chap. xvi. 1—40.)

Then follows the murmuring of the people in consequence of the punishment inflicted on the parties to the preceding rebellion. This is related in connexion with the experiment of laying up twelve rods, one for each tribe, before the Lord, and the budding of Aaron's ; a miracle which settled the question of his Divine appointment to the high-priesthood, and of the tribe of the Levites to minister in the sanctuary. (Chap. xvi. 41—50 ; xvii.) This Divine interposition is followed by sundry laws concerning the priestly office, the Levites, the waters of separation, and the ashes of the red heifer, and its use in the purification of the unclean. (Chap. xviii., xix.)

The seventh murmuring was occasioned by the want of water in the desert of Zin. This stands connected with the account of the transgression of Moses, the perfidy of the Edomites, and the death of Aaron. (Chap. xx.)

The last instance of this kind that we meet with arose in consequence of the weariness of the people, through their continual journeying. They were now travelling round the mountain-ridge of Edom. The inhabitants had refused to allow them to pass through the land, a course which would in a very few days have taken them across this narrow territory to the eastern desert ; and the Lord had forbidden them to make any aggression on the Edomites : so that the people, dispirited and distressed, had no alternative but to journey above one hundred miles to Elath, and then, having rounded that point, to go an equal distance back again on the east side of the mountains, when fifteen or eighteen miles would have led them across the country at Mount Hor, and have saved them this immense fatigue. Under the pressure of this affliction they again murmured against God, and he sent fiery serpents amongst them, which destroyed many ; until at length, on their repent-



ance, Moses, at the command of the Lord, made a serpent of brass, and placed it on a pole; when, whoever looked on this brassen serpent, no matter how severely he might have been bitten, was healed. After this infliction the host passed on toward the north, until they arrived at the plains of Moab on the east side of Jordan, and very near to the land which had been promised as their resting-place and inheritance. (Chap. xxi.)

The fourth and final part of this book contains three sections of great interest and importance. The first concerns the various efforts of the king of Moab to defeat the destiny of Israel,—first, by means of Balaam, the Gentile prophet, whose story furnishes some very glorious predictions; and, secondly, the means taken by his advice to ensnare the Israelites into the sins of profligacy and idolatry. (Chap. xxii.—xxv.)

This account is followed by a second enumeration of the people; which census, no less signally than the former, proves the truth of the Divine predictions, and the wonderful interposition of the Lord on behalf of Israel. For although they had been now nearly forty years in the desert, had been subjected to so many plagues and chastisements, and had, in fact, totally lost the generation of men which came out of Egypt, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, when numbered on the plains of Moab they are found but 1,820 men less than at the former census.

The remaining chapters give an account of the appointment of Joshua to be the successor of Moses, various regulations concerning sacrifices, the partition of the promised land, and a brief recapitulation of the several stages of the journeyings of the Israelites.

The narrative in the Book of Numbers is most essential to sacred history. We pass over several interesting points which will be noticed in future lectures, and dwell here on one important fact,—the sojourn, for forty years in that wilderness, of 600,000 men of an age to go forth to war, with all their aged relatives, their wives and children, with all their cattle. This fact is undoubted, and is of itself demonstrable evidence of the presence and interposition of God. A thousandth part of such a host never has, and never could have, subsisted in this desert for a single year, except on that occasion. Then we observe the momentous truth connected with this unprecedented journey,—that God, for their disobedience, rejected almost the whole of that faithless generation, and cut them off from the enjoyment of the blessings which he had promised;

and, lastly, that, notwithstanding this rejection of the rebellious Israelites, he brought their career to a satisfactory termination. In the case of Balaam, he showed the glorious fulness of his prescience, and placed the new generation of Israel on the threshold of the promised country, under the full blaze of revealed truth, and in the experience of the gracious protection of Jehovah.

We proceed now to review the last book of the Pentateuch, called in our version DEUTERONOMY. This word is derived from the title given to it by the Greek translators, which signifies, "the Second Law." The period of time comprised in the events recorded in this book is variously estimated at from five weeks to two months: it seems to have been written on the plains of Moab by Moses, a short time before his death.

The title given to this portion of scripture (namely, "the Second Law") should be regarded not as a mere appellation, but as conveying the most emphatic and significant meaning. Of course, this phrase is not to be understood as referring to the enunciation of a new or supplemental code, but rather in the sense of the Hebrew title, *Misneh Torah*, "the Repetition of the Law." But then, although it is a repetition of the same law, it is not repeated to the same persons, in the same manner, or under the same circumstances. It may be necessary to make an observation or two on these points, as they involve, to some extent, the scope, character, and peculiar pathos of the book.

In the Book of Deuteronomy Moses does not repeat the law to the same persons who received it from his lips at Sinai: these, with very few exceptions, were dead. It was to their children, who had risen up into the duties of active life, during their journeyings in the wilderness, that these chapters were addressed. Nor was this repetition of the law communicated in the same manner as it had been in substance given to their fathers at Sinai. Then, it was communicated as the enactment of certain laws, which were delivered by Moses, and urged on the acceptance and obedience of the people, as the direct revelations and requirements of God. Now, the repetition of these does not appear in the form of law, but they are given as powerful and pathetic religious discourses. In the first instance, Moses is scarcely seen; the manner in which the law was given was such as to fill the mind with impressions of the Divine Lawgiver, and the parties for whom he legislated. Now, we have before us not only these two parties, but we see also before us, in all its depth and fulness, the

piety, power, and experience of Moses. These discourses are pervaded throughout by a thoroughly sublime and prophetic spirit. The man of God has his whole soul set on the religious duties, temptations, and frailties of his people; and, consequently, on their probable course of action, relations, future fate, and eventful vicissitudes.

These inspired speeches begin with the enumeration of the wonderful dealings of God, on behalf of his chosen people, in the early period of their existence. Moses seems, in fact, to expatiate on a subject which had engrossed his whole life, and absorbed his very soul. He therefore speaks under the living impression of events long past, and brings before the minds of the people a vivid picture of the Divine procedure. In doing this, he clearly proves that their obduracy and unbelief had occasioned all their calamities, and retarded the accomplishment of those gracious promises which were now on the point of being fulfilled. Full of the danger to which they were exposed, of relapsing into similar disobedience, he conjures them to hold fast the commandments of the Lord, and to serve him, lest, instead of the blessings which were designed for them, they should be rendered the instruments of severe punishment. The inspired speaker thence enforces the spirituality of the law, and continues a series of most impassioned and instructive exhortations.

The circumstances under which these communications were made were, also, very peculiar. Scarcely ever did a leader stand in such a filial relation to a people as Moses did to the Israelites: he was, in an eminent sense, the father of his nation. He had instrumentally been the means of delivering them from the vile and painful bondage of Egypt, of giving them their ecclesiastical and civil constitution. He had led them through the desert for forty years. All the Hebrews who listened to those discourses on the plains of Moab had grown up to manhood under his fostering care, and had been taught and trained by his devoted zeal. More than all this, Moses knew that he was about to be removed from this people. He was aware that just as they were to enter upon the land of promise, and to engage in an enterprise which involved their existence as a nation, and which could only be rendered successful by their fidelity to God, he would have to resign his charge and die. It was under a strong recollection of their past history, in the immediate prospect of their future hazards, that Moses, burning with unquenchable love for his people, standing on the threshold of his heavenly reward, delivered these noble discourses. We need not wonder, then, that a mind like his, in



such circumstances, speaking under plenary inspiration, should have poured forth such a volume of fervid sublimity, and glorious, holy eloquence, as we have now before us.

The contents of this book may be divided into four parts. The first contains a brief repetition of the history contained in the preceding books. (Chap. i.—iv.) We have here a relation of the events which took place from the time the Israelites left Horeb until they arrived at Kadesh; (chap. i. ;) their journey from Kadesh until they reached the land of the Amorites, the defeat of Sihon and Og, and the division of their countries among the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; (chap. ii., iii. ;) which is followed by an exhortation to obey the Divine law, and to avoid idolatry, founded on their past experience of the goodness of God. (Chap. iv.)

The second part contains a brief recital of the moral, ceremonial, and judicial law. (Chap. v.—xxvi.) The following may be taken as an analysis of this part: a repetition of the ten commandments: (chap. v. 1—22 :) the effect of these on the people of Israel: (verses 22—33 :) the first commandment explained and enforced: (chap. vi. :) an exposition of the second commandment, with various exhortations: (chap. vii. :) motives to obedience drawn from a review of past mercies, and the consideration that Jehovah was about to bring them into the promised land, not on account of their righteousness, but of his great mercy: (chap. viii.—xi. :) thence follows an abstract of the ceremonial law, the abolition of idolatry to be enforced, with regulations for Divine worship: (chap. xii. :) laws against false prophets, and idolatrous cities: (chap. xiii. :) prohibition of certain Heathen practices in times of mourning: (chap. xiv. 1, 2 :) the laws concerning clean and unclean animals: (verses 3—21 :) the payment of tithes to the Levites: (verses 22—29 :) regulations concerning the year of release, (chap. xv.,) and the stated annual feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles: (chap. xvi. 1—17 :) the election of judges, and the administration of justice: (verses 18—20 :) a prohibition against planting groves and setting up idols near the altar of God: (verses 21, 22 :) a recital and exposition of the judicial law follows. (Chap. xvii.—xxvi.) This section contains a command to put all idolaters to death, with regulations for determining difficult controversies, and concerning the election and qualifications of a king: (chap. xvii. :) the maintenance of the priests and Levites: (chap. xviii. 1—8 :) cautions against Gentile abominations, especially divination: (verses 9—14 :) a prediction of the great Prophet that should arise: (verses 15—

19 :) rules to detect false prophets : (verses 20—22 :) laws respecting cities of refuge : (chap. xix. 1—10 :) the treatment of murderers, (verses 11—13,) and the evidence of witnesses : (verses 15—21 :) laws concerning war, and the treatment of the Canaanites : (chap. xx. :) the expiation of uncertain murder, marriage with captives, rights of the firstborn, punishment of a disobedient son, &c. : (chap. xxi. :) regulations concerning things lost or strayed, distinguishing the sexes by their apparel, punishment of adultery : (chap. xxii. :) who may enter into the congregation, uncleanness prohibited, and laws respecting vows, usury, and trespasses : (chap. xxiii. :) of divorces, newly-married men, pledges, wages, the execution of justice, &c. : (chap. xxiv. :) lawsuits, punishments, weights and measures : (chap. xxv. :) ceremonies in offering first-fruits : (chap. xxvi. 1—15 :) the covenant between God and Israel. (Verses 16—19.)

The third part of this book relates to the confirmation of the law which had been thus announced, and the means adopted for making it publicly known, and securing obedience to its requirements. This contains directions for writing the law on stones, and setting them up on Mount Ebal : (chap. xxvii. :) prophetic promises to the obedient, and curses to the disobedient : (chap. xxviii. :) the people exhorted to obedience from a recollection of past mercies, and to devote themselves and their posterity to God : (chap. xxix. :) pardon promised to the penitent : (chap. xxx. 1—14 :) good and evil set before them. (Verses 15—20.)

The fourth and concluding part relates to the personal history of Moses, until his death : Joshua appointed to succeed Moses : (chap. xxxi. 1—8 :) Moses delivers a copy of the law to the priests, to be placed in the ark, and publicly read every seventh year : (verses 9—14 :) his solemn charge to Joshua : (verses 15—27 :) the people convened to hear the prophetic ode of Moses : (verses 28—30 :) the ode : (chap. xxxii. :) the prophetic blessing of Moses on the twelve tribes : (chap. xxxiii. :) the death and burial of Moses. (Chap. xxxiv.)

Much unworthy cavil has been called forth by the narrative of the death of Moses at the end of this book ; but this admits of easy explanation. Of course, Moses did not write the account of his own death and burial. This chapter must therefore have been written by one of Moses's immediate successors, probably by Joshua. It is, indeed, very probable that this chapter was originally the beginning of the succeeding book. The reader should be informed that, in those early days, the practice of dividing a work into books and chapters had not

been introduced, and, as we have already stated, in the ancient Hebrew manuscripts the whole Pentateuch makes but one continuous record. Nothing is more probable, therefore, than that what is now placed as the last chapter of Deuteronomy was originally the first of Joshua.

Another observation is necessary here. How frequently do we hear it said, and sometimes even by preachers, that the law was merely an outward and ceremonial institution; and, on that account, we often find it placed in strong contrast with the gospel! It is indeed true, that the glory of the latter economy quite eclipsed that of the former; but it must never be forgotten, that the former also was glorious, and that not merely in external splendour, but in the revelation of great truths, and the communication of a vast amount of pure evangelical agency. Let the nature of the law, as consisting of love to God and man, be considered; the institution of the prophetic office be remembered; the result of the spiritual discourses which the prophets delivered even in the wilderness be taken into the account; and, above all, let careful attention be given to the depth and power, the purity and spirituality, of the discourses of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy—let these be closely studied; and then, let the pious student say, whether these are elements of an economy merely cold and carnal, external and ceremonial. No, my brethren; the law, indeed, stood connected with a vast range of ceremonial and ritualistic services; but these were full of meaning, and instinct with typical life and teaching. And, besides these, the whole Hebrew ecclesiastical economy, as finally committed to that people by Moses, was charged with a vast amount of pure morality and spiritual instruction, adapted to raise the nation high in moral dignity and spiritual elevation.

We have now to enter on a review of those books of the Old Testament which are purely of an historical character. For, although we fully maintain the historical verity of the Mosaic writings, it is obvious that the greater part of them is occupied with the revelation of Divine laws, and the appointment of a large and important ecclesiastical economy. Here, however, although we have mainly a history of the Hebrew theocracy, which is full of records of the Divine operation and interpositions, the subject is, nevertheless, strictly historical. This section of the Old Testament contains twelve books, extending from Joshua to Esther inclusive. These books, written at different times, and by different persons, have one common prevailing characteristic: they are abridgments or condensations.



of the authentic annals of the Hebrew people. It further seems sufficiently evident, that, although they were written just at the time when the transactions which they relate took place, and under Divine inspiration, they were long afterwards, under the same Divine influence, arranged in the form in which they are transmitted to us. This was probably done to all of them at the same time, and by the same person. This rational supposition accounts for the several allusions to the time when the events took place as being long ago; such as 1 Sam. xxvii. 6: "Unto this day."

Notwithstanding all the cavils of scepticism, we assuredly have, in the scrupulous caution of the Hebrews in the formation of their sacred canon, an important guarantee that no books were received but such as were fully known to have been the result of direct inspiration. They had received the writings of Moses as of incontestable religious authority, supported as they were by the highest proofs of their genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration. They were, therefore, unlikely to place by their side, as of equal authority, productions which, however excellent, were not demonstrably Divine. We know, in fact, that in the worst ages of the Hebrew church they steadily refused to receive apocryphal books into their canon, although recommended by the most eminent names, such as Solomon, Daniel, Ezra, and Baruch. We may therefore rely with more confidence on those writings which were, from time immemorial, regarded by them as authentic and divinely inspired.

The first of these is the **BOOK OF JOSHUA**, which contains the history of the Hebrews during the period of the government of this great man. It may be regarded as a continuation of the Pentateuch, and seems to have been written for the purpose of carrying on the history of the people of God from the point at which it was left by the pen of Moses. We have plain proof of this in the fact, that it begins with a Hebrew word which means, "thereupon it happened;" a phrase which clearly links it to the Book of Deuteronomy, and justifies the observation previously made respecting the authorship of the last two chapters of that book. A brief summary of the contents of Joshua is given in verses 5, 6, of the first chapter: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and be of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them."

These two verses also clearly set before us the two principal subjects of which this book treats ; namely, the conquest of the promised land, and its division among the tribes of Israel.

Joshua is generally supposed to have been the author of this book ; but this is not stated, although, as we know that the early part of it was written during the life of Rahab ; (chap. i 25 ;) that the section describing the division of the land (chap. xiii.—xxii.) speaks with such pointed accuracy respecting minute circumstances connected with this division, that it could only have been written by one fully acquainted with all the particulars ;\* and further, we know that Joshua wrote his last discourses in a book which previously contained divinely revealed matter : for “ Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God.” (Chap. xxiv. 26.) These facts we think sufficient to prove that Joshua was the writer of the book bearing his name. But if this is not regarded as conclusive, the authority of the book is incontestably established by the manner in which its contents are referred to in other sacred writings. See 1 Kings xvi. 34 ; Psalm xliv. 2, 3 ; lxxviii. 12—14 ; lxxviii. 54, 55 ; cxiv. 3, 5 ; Acts vii. 45 ; Heb. iii. 11 ; xi. 30, 31 ; xiii. 5 ; James ii. 25, &c.

The first portion of Joshua describes the conquest and occupation of Canaan by the Israelites. (Chap. i.—xii.) It contains the call and appointment of Joshua to be the successor of Moses : (chap. i. :) the spies sent to Jericho : (chap. ii. :) miraculous passage of the Jordan and the setting up of memorial stones : (chap. iii., iv. :) the circumcision of the Hebrews, and their first passover in Canaan : (chap. v. :) capture of Jericho and Ai : (chap. vi.—viii. :) the craft and servitude of the Gibeonites : (chap. ix. :) the war with Canaanitish kings, and the standing still of the sun : (chap. x. :) defeat of Jabin and his allies : (chap. xi. :) a recapitulation of the conquests of Moses and of Joshua. (Chap. xii.)

The second part gives an account of the division and appointment of the land. (Chap. xiii.—xxii.) Here we have,—a general division of Canaan : (chap. xiii. :) a particular appointment of it among the Israelites, including the portion of Caleb : (chap. xiv. :) the lot of Judah, (chap. xv.,) of Ephraim, (chap. xvi.,) of Manasseh, (chap. xvii.,) of Benjamin, (chap. xviii.,) of Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, and of Joshua : (chap. xix. :) the cities of refuge, (chap. xx.,) and the cities for the Levites : (chap. xxi. :) the dismissal of the soldiers belong-

\* In fact, it were as easy to suppose that Doomsday Book is a forgery of modern times, as that this portion of the Book of Joshua was not written at the time when these events occurred.

ing to the transjordanic tribes, and the circumstances which arose out of the erection of their altar on the borders of Jordan. (Chap. xxii.)

Besides these two portions, which constitute the body of the book, we have the dying addresses and counsels of Joshua, with an account of his death and burial.

This third portion contains Joshua's address to the Hebrews, reminding them of the great benefits conferred on them by God, with an earnest exhortation to obedience: (chap. xxiii. :) Joshua's dying address, and the renewal of the covenant between the Israelites and God: (chap. xxiv. 1—28 :) the death and burial of Joshua, the burial of the bones of Joseph, and the death of Eleazar the high priest. (Verses 29—33.)

The Book of Joshua fully displays the faithfulness of God in the accomplishment of his great promise to the seed of Abraham; namely, that they should have the land of Canaan for a possession.

The BOOK OF JUDGES comes next in order, and is one of the most important of the historical books. It contains the only record which we possess concerning the Israelites for about three hundred years. But the student must not expect to find here a complete history of this period: this it does not furnish, although it supplies most valuable information respecting those very eventful times. Nor can we now ascertain by whom this portion of holy scripture was written. Various names have been suggested by different critics, as that of the author; but all this is fanciful: we have no information respecting it. Nor does the internal evidence which the book supplies establish the opinion that it was all the production of one person. The authority of this portion of scripture is, however, undoubted. It was certainly written so early, that a distinct knowledge of the events recorded were attainable. It was also written before the Second Book of Samuel, (compare 2 Sam. v. 6, 7, with Judges i. 21,) and before the taking of the stronghold of Zion by David. The Book of Judges is also frequently referred to in the other books of holy scripture. Compare Judges iv. 2; vi. 14, and chap. xi., with 1 Sam. xii. 9—12; Judges ix. 53, with 2 Sam. xi. 21; Psalm lxxxiii. 11, with Judges vii. 25; Psalm lxviii. 8, 9, and xcvii. 5, with Judges v. 45. Compare also Matt. ii. 13—23, with Judges xiii. 5; xvi. 17; Acts xiii. 20; Heb. xi. 32. It is thus clearly identified with the sacred canon, and shown to be an ancient, authentic, and inspired portion of the sacred records.



The strictly historical portion of this book extends from the beginning of the first to the end of the sixteenth chapter. Here the writer shows the condition of the Hebrews for some time after the death of Joshua ; and then proceeds to recount their successive departures from the ways of the Lord, and the consequent punishment and interpositions which they were made to experience. This portion contains,—the state of the Israelites from the death of Joshua until they began to fall into idolatrous practices : (chap. i.—iii. 4 :) the subjection of the transjordanic tribes to the king of Mesopotamia, and their deliverance by Othniel : (chap. iii. 5—11 :) the tyranny of the king of Moab over the eastern Israelites ; their deliverance by Ehud ; Shamgar's prowess against the Philistines : (verses 12—31 :) the Israelites of the northern tribes oppressed by Jabin, and delivered by Deborah and Barak : (chap. iv. :) triumphal ode of Deborah : (chap. v. :) the Midianites oppress the Israelites of the east and the north, who are delivered by Gideon ; history of this judge, and of his family, including the case of Abimelech : (chap. vi.—ix. :) history of the judges Tola and Jair : the Israelites, being oppressed by the Ammonites, are delivered by Jephthah : the administrations of the judges Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon : (chap. x.—xii. :) the birth of Samson, oppression of Israel by the Philistines, and their deliverance by Samson, with an account of his death. (Chap. xiii.—xvi.)

Thus far this book presents a consecutive series of incidents, of great religious and national importance, although not so connected as to form the basis of a history of the period. What follows must be regarded as an appendix to the sixteen chapters which have been already noticed. This contains two separate fragmentary accounts, which are inserted here without any regard to chronological order, for the purpose of giving information on two very important events in the annals of the Hebrew nation ; namely, the introduction of idolatry, and the near approach of the tribe of Benjamin to extinction. The first of these events must have occurred soon after, if not even before, the death of Joshua ; for the tribe of Dan had not at this time fully settled down in their portion. This section gives an account of the idol of Micah, and its worship, at first privately in his own family, (chap. xvii.,) and afterwards publicly by the tribe of Dan. (Chap. xviii.) The second event, the war with Benjamin, must have occurred soon afterward ; for Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was alive at the time of the battle of Gibeah ; (chap. xx. 28 ;) and this iniquity is spoken of as the first open and public transgression

of Israel. (Hosea x. 9.) This section gives an account of a very flagrant act of violence and murder committed on the person of a woman by the Benjamites of Gibeah: (chap. xix. :) the war of the other tribes with them, by which the tribe of Benjamin was almost destroyed. (Chap. xx., xxi.) It is worthy of observation, that St. Paul selects several of these judges, as men who were eminent examples of the power of faith; such as Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah. (Heb. xi. 32.)

The BOOK OF RUTH, which stands next in the sacred canon, is generally regarded as a supplement to the Book of Judges, and as introductory to those of Samuel: it is, consequently, with great propriety placed in its present position. In the ancient Jewish canon, Ruth made a part of the Book of Judges. It is matter of some doubt when the events recorded in this narrative occurred; some critics placing them as early as the time of Joshua, and others bringing them down to the days of Eli. The Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne thinks it probable that they occurred about the time of Gideon. The book is important, as casting light on the genealogy of our great Redeemer. Although the canonical authority of this book has never been questioned, no intimation is given respecting its author. The great majority of critics regard it as the production of Samuel; and this is rendered probable from the fact, that it bears internal evidence of having been written some considerable time after the events which it records took place. This is proved by the expression, "Now this was the manner *in former time* in Israel;" (chap. iv. 7;) and also by another, "When the judges ruled." (Chap. i. 1.)

The Book of Ruth, which is divided into four chapters, may, in regard of the subject-matter which it records, be considered as comprising three sections: 1. An account of Naomi, from her leaving Canaan to go to Moab with her husband, Elimelech, to her return from thence with Ruth, her daughter-in-law. (Chap. i.) 2. The circumstances which brought Ruth into intercourse with Boaz, and their marriage. (Chap. ii.—iv. 1—12.) 3. The birth of Obed, the son of Boaz by Ruth, from whom David was descended. (Chap. iv. 13—18.)

We now come to the central point of Hebrew history, in the consideration of the BOOKS OF SAMUEL. From the exodus to the death of Joshua, the Hebrews, although placed in immediate proximity to God as their Lord and King, were, nevertheless, subject to the direction of their divinely-

appointed leaders; first, of Moses, and, after his death, of Joshua. But then the Hebrews were left to the full operation of the theocratic form of government which God had appointed them. This has been termed the period of Hebrew republicanism; but this is not correct. Regarded merely as a community, they were left under the government of their patriarchal chiefs, the heads of the several tribes or clans. But, considered in respect of their peculiar covenant relation to God, they were subject to him, and ought to have regarded him alone as their political as well as their religious Head. And there can be no question but that if this people had faithfully performed their part of the covenant, they would have risen to the highest moral, religious, and political elevation, receiving from him, through the high priest, guidance, information, or aid, as their circumstances required, and realising all the blessings consequent on their having God for their King.

The Book of Judges, however, shows that the Israelites were unfaithful to their high vocation. Instead of evincing generally the effect of their common faith and privilege in making them the people of God, they sank down into mere clanship, and, as the record fully proves, the service of Jehovah was not only generally neglected, but idols were frequently worshipped in direct defiance of the Divine law. The same book also fully shows this incurable indisposition of the people to be faithful to the duties which they owed to their theocracy. The Books of Samuel open with a greatly superior effort to raise them, by the administration of a wise, zealous, and holy judge, to a better state; but even this having failed, it passes on to record the introduction of monarchy, and the history of the people under this new mode of government.

The names given to these books are rather singular, and to some extent embarrassing. In the Hebrew these form but one book, which is called "the Book of Samuel." But why? It is said, "Because it relates his actions, and was probably written by him." But this can only be true of the first twenty-four chapters. Then the Septuagint and Vulgate call them the First and Second Books of Kings, or of kingdoms. But this seems also inapplicable, inasmuch as they refer but to two kings, and do not even complete an account of the second reign.

There has been considerable difference of opinion respecting the author of this portion of scripture. But on this head we think there is little room for doubt. We read that "the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in



the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer." (1 Chron. xxix. 29.) Now, as it is certain that the Books of Samuel were written before the First Book of Kings, (compare 1 Sam. ii. 31, with 1 Kings ii. 27,) it can scarcely be doubted, that this prophet compiled an outline of Hebrew history during his own life, and that this was afterward continued by Nathan and Gad, inspired seers like himself.

Each of the Books of Samuel may, in respect of their contents, be divided into three parts. The first portion of the First Book relates the events of Hebrew history from the birth of Samuel to the death of Eli. The birth of Samuel: (chap. i. :) the thanksgiving and prophetic hymn of Hannah: (chap. ii. :) the call of Samuel; he receives a prophecy against Eli, and is established in the prophetic office: (chap. iii. :) the ark of God taken by the Philistines; the death of Eli. (Chap. iv.)

The second part of this book contains an account of the Israelites whilst under the government of Samuel as judge. It records the destruction of the Philistine idol Dagon before the ark: (chap. v. :) the continued punishment of the Philistines until the ark is restored, and the judgment on the men of Bethshemesh for daring to look into it: (chap. vi. :) Samuel persuades the people to abandon idolatry, they repent at Mizpeh, and defeat the Philistines: (chap. vii. :) the Israelites demand a king—the appointment of Saul to the regal dignity: (chap. viii., ix. :) his inauguration: (chap. x. :) he defeats the Ammonites: (chap. xi. :) Samuel resigns the supreme judicial power. (Chap. xii.)

The third part contains an account of the reign of Saul: Its auspicious opening: (chap. xiii. :) his victory over the Philistines: (chap. xiv. :) his disobedience in the case of the Amalekites, and judicial rejection: (chap. xv. :) then follows a relation of the circumstances which arose out of the Divine election of David to the sovereignty. He kills Goliath: (chap. xvi., xvii. :) Saul persecutes David; his covenant with Jonathan: (chap. xviii. :) David seeks safety in flight: (chap. xix. :) continued friendship with Jonathan: (chap. xx. :) goes to Nob, and thence to Achish of Gath: (chap. xxi. :) David flies to the land of Moab; the cruel slaughter of the priests at Nob: (chap. xxii. :) David delivers Keilah, flies to Ziph and Maon: (chap. xxiii. :) David spares Saul's life: (chap. xxiv. :) conduct of Nabal: (chap. xxv. :) David spares Saul's life a second time: (chap. xxvi. :) he again flies to Achish of Gath: (chap. xxvii. :)

Saul, brought into great trouble, consults the witch of Endor : (chap. xxviii. :) the Philistines march to Aphek, but expel David and his troop from their army : (chap. xxix. :) David pursues the Amalekites, who had sacked Ziklag, defeats them, and recovers the spoil : (chap. xxx. :) death of Saul, and defeat of the Israelites. (Chap. xxxi.)

The Second Book of Samuel contains a history of the reign of David during forty years. And as he was one of the most eminent of men, remarkable alike for great and varied talents and deep piety, and yet falls into grievous sins, of which he deeply repents, and is restored to piety and peace, this portion of sacred history is replete with the greatest interest and importance.

The first part of the book refers to that brilliant portion of David's reign which was marked by a continual series of military triumphs. It contains his elegant elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan : (chap. i. :) then relates his appointment to be king over Judah, and at length over the whole of Israel : (chap. ii.—iv. :) his victories over the Jebusites and Philistines : (chap. v. :) the ark of God brought to Jerusalem : (chap. vi. :) his prayer on that occasion : (chap. vii. :) his victories over the Philistines, Amorites, and other nations. (Chap. viii.—x.)

The second part of this book mainly concerns the sins of David, and their unhappy consequences. David's sin in the case of Uriah, and the punishment threatened in consequence : (chap. xi., xii. :) the fulfilment of this threatening in the sin of Amon, the rebellion of Absalom, the exile of David from the throne, the death of Absalom, and David's sorrow on that account. (Chap. xiii.—xix.)

The third part records David's restoration to the throne, and the subsequent events of his reign. David returns to Jerusalem, Joab puts down the insurrection of Sheba : (chap. xx. :) David subdues the Philistines : (chap. xxi. :) his psalm of praise on reviewing the mercies of his life : (chap. xxii. :) the last words of David, with the names of his mighty men : (chap. xxiii. :) David's second great offence in numbering the people ; his punishment, penitence, and sacrifice. (Chap. xxiv.)

The plain, straightforward honesty and simplicity of this account is most manifest. Here is no trace of party feeling, or national vanity ; no attempt to give a high colouring to virtue, or to extenuate vice. David presented a character to the historian that could scarcely be contemplated without deep feeling and interest. Yet we find his great sins faithfully

recorded ; so that the people saw in the annals of their most admired and honoured heroes a distinct recognition of the Divine law, and a proof of the supreme majesty of God. These books place before the reader a lively exhibition of the faithfulness of the Lord, inasmuch as we see, notwithstanding the general infidelity of the people for a long time, and the heinous transgressions of their greatest men, the elevation of the Hebrew nation to all the power, wealth, and honour which had been promised them through Moses. And all this is done in a manner which every where condemns sin, and honours and exalts the law of God.

The BOOKS OF KINGS continue the history of the Hebrew nation from the point where it had been left by the Books of Samuel. They do this so exactly, and record the last days of David, and the first acts of Solomon, in a manner so like that seen in the Books of Samuel, that it has on this ground been contended that originally the whole made but one book. There can, however, be little doubt, that these books have a purely distinct authorship and character, yet they originally made one unbroken treatise ; an opinion which was steadily held by Origen, Jerome, and many of the best-informed of the fathers. These books give us the records of the affairs of the Israelites during a period of more than three hundred years. The reign of Solomon is described at considerable length ; those of his successors more briefly ; although the affairs of the kingdom of Judah clearly engage a larger portion of the author's attention than those of Israel. The real character of the production as a literary work, it is difficult to describe. It is not a biographical account of the several sovereigns, although much information is given of their personal character : nor is it a mere record of political occurrences, notwithstanding there is scarcely any thing that affected the condition of the state which is left unnoticed : whilst, although it is not a register of ecclesiastical affairs, it affords a large amount of information respecting the conduct of the priests, and presents, in a striking point of view, the various declensions and revivals of religion which followed each other in the course of this period. These books, indeed, present such an account as could have been given of none but the Hebrew nation. It is a theocratic sketch of the operation of a designed theocracy. The writers were evidently so filled with the idea of this peculiar covenant government, and its consequent requirements, that every thing is treated of by them in subordination to this ruling element of



the Hebrew state. The consequence is, that, without appearing to aim at anything of the kind, they have here supplied a continued practical commentary upon the promises and threatenings of the Pentateuch.

No portion of holy scripture has been more extensively mistaken or misrepresented than this. The pious among the priests and the prophets have been represented as selfish, time-serving, or violent politicians, according to the opinions which different minds have formed of their actions. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that these persons frequently assumed an authority with which no subject in an ordinary state can safely be trusted. They roused the people, or dared the sovereign, as the case might be ; but then it is certain that they acted under an absorbing sense of responsibility to God as the King, the Ruler of his people. We have many proofs of this ; but especially that of the constant recognition of Jehovah in this character, and his will, as the permanent law of the theocracy. As, therefore, no other people ever lived under such a peculiar political constitution, so the conduct or motives of the leading Hebrews must not be judged of by the analogies presented by the public men of other nations.

The Divine authority of these books has never been questioned. They have been received into the sacred canon in all ages of the Jewish and Christian churches. Their contents are cited as authentic and canonical by our Saviour, (Luke iv. 25—27,) and by his apostles. (Acts vii. 47 ; Rom. xi. 2—4 ; James v. 17, 18.)

The First Book of Kings treats of a period of one hundred and twenty-six years. It may be divided into two parts ; the first extending from the inauguration of Solomon as a partner in the government to his death. (Chap. i.—xi.) The principal contents of this portion are,—the last days of David, with the appointment of Solomon to be his successor : (chap. i., ii. 1—11 :) the reign of Solomon from the death of David to the foundation of the temple : (chap. ii. 12—iv. :) the preparations for, and the building of, the temple, with the provision of its gorgeous furniture : (chap. v.—vii. :) the dedication of the temple, and the prayer of Solomon on that occasion : (chap. viii. :) the remainder of Solomon's reign, including his successful commercial operations, the visit of the queen of Sheba, the splendour and riches to which he was raised, his fall into idolatry, his consequent troubles and death. (Chap. ix.—xi.)

The second part contains the history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel from the accession of Rehoboam to the time of Jehoshaphat. (Chap. xii.—xxii.) It contains,—the accession of

Jeroboam and secession of the ten tribes: (chap. xii. :) the reigns of Rehoboam in Judah and Jeroboam in Israel: (chap. xiii., xiv. :) the reigns of Abijam and Asa in Judah, and their contemporaries, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and the accession of Ahab: (chap. xv., xvi. :) the reigns of Jehoshaphat in Judah, and of Ahab and Ahaziah in Israel, and the prophetic course of Elijah. (Chap. xvii.—xxii.)

The Second Book of Kings contains a history of the two kingdoms of Judah until the ruin of the respective nations, extending over a period of three hundred years. During this era the prophetic institute was at its highest point of power and influence, as will be seen in the fact, that within this time, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, and Ezekiel, &c., prophesied.

This book may also be divided into two parts; the first extending to the ruin and captivity of the kingdom of Israel. (Chap. i.—xvii.) It records the contemporary reigns of Jehoshaphat in Judah, and Ahaziah and Joram in Israel, the translation of Elijah, Elisha appointed to succeed him in the prophetic office, his miracles: (chap. i.—vii. :) Jehoram and Ahaziah reign in Judah, and Joram in Israel: (chap. viii. :) Jehu assumes the sovereignty of Israel, kills Joram, and reigns; Jehu also kills Ahaziah, king of Judah, Athaliah usurps the throne of that kingdom: (chap. ix.—xi. 1—3 :) Jehoash reigns in Judah, and Jehoahaz and Jehoash in Israel, death of Elisha, and miracle at his interment: (chap. xi. 4—21—xiii. :) the reigns of Amaziah, Uzziah, and Jotham in Judah, and Joash, Jeroboam II., Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah in Israel: (chap. xiv., xv. :) the reign of Ahaz in Judah, interregnum in Israel; after which Hoshea reigns, in the ninth year of whose government Samaria is taken by the Assyrians, and the kingdom of Israel subverted. (Chap. xvi., xvii.)

The second part of this Second Book contains an account of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah. (Chap. xviii.—xxv.) It records the reign of Hezekiah, his war with Assyria, the army of that nation miraculously destroyed, Hezekiah restored from a mortal disease, the Babylonish captivity threatened, Hezekiah's death: (chap. xviii.—xx. :) Manasseh reigns, is succeeded by Amon: (chap. xxi. :) reign of Josiah: (chap. xxii., xxiii. 1—30 :) the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, Jerusalem taken and destroyed in the eleventh year of this reign, and Judah carried into captivity. (Chap. xxiii. 31—xxv.)

The FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS OF CHRONICLES next in order claim our attention.

This name appears to have been first given to these books by Jerome. The Hebrew appellation signifies "words of days, diaries, or journals." The Hebrews regard them but as one book. The Septuagint translators, however, divide them into two, and call them *Παραλειπόμενα*, or, "the things omitted," evidently regarding them as supplementary to the other historical records belonging to the Old-Testament canon.

It is scarcely consistent to speak of the author of such records, as it must be evident that, beginning with Adam, and extending to the time of Cyrus, the matter must have been collected from ancient and pre-existing materials. But it does become a subject of some interest and importance as to the person who made this collection, and gave to the church this outline of ancient annals. This question has, by the labour of numerous scholars and their extensive researches, been narrowed to a single point; namely, whether we owe the compilation of the Chronicles to Ezra, or to a subsequent inspired writer.

A great mass of evidence has been collected to prove that Ezra was the compiler: such as, the diction perfectly agreeing with his age, the exact correspondence of the style of the Chronicles to that of the Book of Ezra, and the certainty that it was written after the restoration. It is further alleged, in support of this opinion, that the first three verses of the Book of Ezra are nearly the same as the last two of the Chronicles; as if the writer repeated his own words at the commencement of another book. These arguments would be conclusive, but for two facts which must be mentioned, as weighing greatly against them: 1. The genealogy in 1 Chron. vi. 3, does not agree with that in Ezra vii. 1. This may, however, admit of a satisfactory solution; but, 2. We find that, in the Books of Chronicles, the genealogy of Zerubbabel is carried down twelve generations after him, which must have been long after the time of Ezra. But whoever was the writer of this portion of scripture, its authenticity is abundantly sustained by undoubted external evidence, by which also its Divine inspiration is fully established.

These books afford wonderful proofs of the exactitude with which the Hebrews, from the earliest times, preserved their genealogical tables. But while they are, on this account, valuable, as completing our information respecting many points of which we should otherwise be ignorant, they are important on even higher grounds: inasmuch as in respect of many most interesting events of Hebrew history, they afford an expansion of



the subject, which brings out very richly the mind of the Holy Spirit, and sheds a flood of light on the real character of the Divine dealings with his highly favoured, but very ungrateful and rebellious, people. One instance of this kind may be noticed; namely, the erection of the tabernacle of David on Mount Zion, (1 Chron. xv., xvi.,) in which he placed the ark of God, and established a regular service, where the pious king and his religious associates worshipped before the glorious symbol of the Divine Presence, without the intervention of sacrifice or priest. So that, whilst the old tabernacle stood on Gibeon, and remained the seat of the Mosaic ceremonial service, David and his pious associates worshipped before the ark in Zion, with a service of song, and prayer, and by a full and free declaration of the goodness of God to their happy souls. Chapters which convey to our minds a knowledge of such glorious truths should not pass unread because some of them contain apparently dry details of ancestry and lineage.

The two Books of the Chronicles have been divided into four parts. The first of these contains genealogical tables of the early patriarchs and of the Hebrew people from Adam to the time of Ezra. (1 Chron. i.—ix.) We have here a regular table of the line of descent from Adam to Jacob, including the collateral branches of the patriarchal families and the descendants of Esau, with the posterity of Judah to David, and thence to Zerubbabel, who was to be a progenitor of Christ: (chap. i.—iii. :) a more particular detail of the children of Judah by Pharez, and of the other sons of Israel. (Chap. iv.—viii.) This is followed by a minute enumeration of the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem after the return from the Babylonish captivity, with their line of descent from the sons of Jacob. (Chap. ix. 1—34.)

The second part records the principal events which occurred to the Hebrew nation from the death of Saul to that of David. (Chap. ix. 35—xxix. 22.) In this portion is recorded the genealogy of Saul, and his death: (chap. ix. 35; x. :) the accession of David, and a list of his chief worthies and forces: (chap. xi., xii. :) the removal of the ark to the tabernacle of David, on Zion, and the religious service performed on that occasion, with the arrangements for the conducting of future services there: (chap. xiii.—xvi. :) David's purpose to build a temple to God approved, but the work reserved for his son: (chap. xvii. :) in a series of brilliant campaigns David subdues the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Edomites, and Ammonites: (chap. xviii.—xx. :) David, numbering the people, is punished by

a pestilence, which is stayed at his intercession: (chap. xxi. 1—27 :) David's arrangements for the temple-service, preparations for the building, and regulations for the priests, Levites, and other officers: (chap. xxi. 27—xxvi. :) David's arrangement for the administration of the public service, with the names of his principal officers: (chap. xxvii. :) his address to Solomon and the princes concerning the building of the temple, the contributions made for this purpose, and the king's thanksgiving. (Chap. xxviii.—xxix. 22.)

The third part of these books contains an account of the reign of Solomon. (1 Chron. xxix. 23—2 Chron. ix.) It records the second inauguration of Solomon, the death of David, the piety and wisdom of the young king, and his great prosperity: (1 Chron. xxix. 23—2 Chron. i. :) the building and consecration of the temple, and of other public and royal edifices: (chap. ii. —viii. 16 :) further history of Solomon's reign to his death. (Chap. viii. 17; ix.)

The concluding part contains the history of the kingdom of Judah, from the revolt of the ten tribes to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. (Chap. x.—xxxvi.) The several reigns are treated of in the following sections: Rehoboam: (chap. x.—xii. :) Abijah: (chap. xiii. :) Asa: (chap. xiv.—xvi. :) Jehoshaphat: (chap. xvii.—xx. :) Jehoram: (chap. xxi. :) Ahaziah: (chap. xxii. 1—9 :) Athaliah: (chap. xxii. 10—xxiii. 15 :) Joash: (chap. xxiv. :) Amaziah: (chap. xxv. :) Uzziah: (chap. xxvi. :) Jotham: (chap. xxvii. :) Ahaz: (chap. xxviii. :) Hezekiah: (chap. xxix.—xxxii. :) Manasseh: (chap. xxxiii. 1—20 :) Amon: (verses 21—25 :) Josiah: (chap. xxxiv., xxxv. :) Jehoahaz: (chap. xxxvi. 1—4 :) Jehoiakim: (verses 5—8 :) Jehoiachin: (verses 9, 10 :) Zedekiah. (Verses 11—21.)

I need scarcely remind the biblical student that to study this history with the greatest advantage, the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles should be read together, and the bearing of each upon the various events narrated, carefully compared, so that the full effect of their united information may be apprehended.

We have now to call attention to the BOOK OF EZRA, which affords a most important contribution to the history of the Hebrew people.

Ezra, the author, was a Hebrew priest and scribe, a lineal descendant from Phinehas, the son of Aaron. He is said in scripture to have been the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, which Seraiah was slain at Riblah by command of Nebuchad-

nezzar. But as one hundred and thirty years elapsed from the death of Seraiah to the departure of Ezra from Babylon, the term "son" must be understood to mean a lineal descendant, whether grandson or even great grandson; a sense in which the word frequently occurs in the Hebrew scriptures. Josephus adds to our information respecting Ezra, that "he acted as the high priest of the Jews who remained at Babylon; that he was particularly conversant with the laws of Moses; and was held in universal esteem for his righteousness and virtue."

It may be necessary to notice here the precise position which the author and the events recorded in this book occupy in the general history. Cyrus had proclaimed liberty for the Jews to return to their own land, B.C. 536, when great numbers availed themselves of this permission, and proceeded to rebuild the temple. This pious work was interrupted by order of Cambyses, on the appeal of the Samaritans, B.C. 529. On the accession of Darius, the work was resumed, and the temple finished, B.C. 516. During the remainder of this reign, and throughout that of his successor Xerxes, the Jews gradually advanced with the rebuilding of the city, and the consolidation of their institutions. They were, however, harassed by continual opposition, and were only able to proceed slowly with the great work of Hebrew restoration. At length Artaxerxes Longimanus ascended the throne; and, having put away his queen Vashti, he became the husband of the beautiful Jewess, Esther.

This prince, moved by considerations which are not set forth in the sacred record, and which might be either a partiality for the people of his queen, or a desire to rear up in western Asia a formidable power to enable him thus to secure the means of more effectually resisting the prowess and daring of Greece, in the seventh year of his reign sent Ezra with a royal commission and costly donations to Palestine, to promote more fully the work to which the Hebrew people were devoted. Not only had Ezra these gifts and powers, but a mandate was at the same time sent to the governors of Syria, to afford him all needful aid for the accomplishment of his object. At the same time a royal edict encouraged the Jews, still remaining in Chaldea, to go up with this priest to the land of their fathers. Great numbers responded to the call, and Ezra proceeded with a numerous company to Jerusalem, where he zealously devoted himself to the accomplishment of his important mission.

The book before us exhibits the whole case in detail, as our analysis of its contents will show. But the careful reader will



not fail to perceive, here, the true reason of the difficulty of the Hebrews, the great cause of their want of success. They could only prosper politically as they were religious; and they were too faithless, carnal, and sensual to secure success by this means.

The contents of this book may be divided into two parts; the first affording an abstract of Jewish history from the return of Zerubbabel to the re-building of the temple; (chap. i.—vi. ;) the second, from the arrival of Ezra to the revival of religion which resulted from his efforts. (Chap. vii.—x.) The first part contains the edict of Cyrus, allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem, an account of those who, availing themselves of this liberty, went up with Zerubbabel to Palestine, and of their contributions toward the erection of the temple: (chap. i., ii. :) the building of the temple begun, but hindered by the opposition of the Samaritans: (chap. iii., iv. :) the temple finished, mainly by the effect of the decree of Darius. (Chap. v., vi.)

The second part of the book gives an account of the arrival of Ezra at Jerusalem, and of his labours there until favoured with a great revival of religion. (Chap. vii.—x.) It contains the departure of Ezra from Babylon with a royal commission: (chap. vii. :) account of his arrival at Jerusalem, the genealogy of those who accompanied him, and the treasure which he brought: (chap. viii. :) narrative of his sorrow, efforts, and success. (Chap. ix., x.)

The devout reader will easily recognise the character of the change effected at Jerusalem by the pious efforts of Ezra. It has been usually called “a reformation;” and such it certainly was, but not in the sense in which that term is most frequently used. It was not a recovery of the people from erroneous doctrines, but from sinful practices. The means used were not laborious argument, but earnest prayer to God. The submission of the people was not marked by creeds, or terms of compact, but by deep penitential sorrow, and a consequent determination to obey God. It was, in fact, a revival of religion, wrought by the special agency of the Holy Spirit, crowning the efforts of this devoted servant of the Lord.

The BOOK OF NEHEMIAH, which follows that of Ezra in the sacred canon, was formerly regarded as connected with it, either as forming one book, or under the name of the Second Book of Ezra. There is, however, no doubt that it was written by the Hebrew patriot whose actions it records, although it seems equally plain

that he wrote it as a sequel to, or a continuation of, the Book of Ezra. This, indeed, seems sufficiently evident from the opening words, which, immediately following its title of "The words of Nehemiah," are, "And it came to pass."

The descent of this patriot and author is not known ; but he was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus ; and while discharging the duties of this office, he received information that the Hebrews who had returned to Jerusalem were in a state of great affliction and embarrassment, and unable to continue the building of the city, or the walls of Jerusalem. This filled the pious and patriotic Nehemiah with the deepest sorrow ; to such an extent, indeed, that his royal master, perceiving his sadness, inquired into the cause, and at length sent him with a royal commission to the aid of his brethren. His book records the results of this measure, and affords most important information respecting the restoration of the Hebrew people and polity. Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem thirteen years after Ezra, with authority, as the governor of the province, to prosecute the restoration of Jerusalem, and to promote, in every possible way, the improvement of the Hebrews. The canonical authority of this book is established by very ancient testimony.

The contents of the book have been divided into four parts, or sections. The first gives an account of the circumstances which led to the appointment of Nehemiah, his royal commission and journey to Jerusalem. (Chap. i., ii. 11.) The second part records the building of the walls of the city, notwithstanding the fierce opposition of Sanballat and his abettors. (Chap. ii. 12—vi.) The third portion relates the means which were successfully used by Nehemiah to improve the religious character of his people. This is a most important part of the work, and gives a register of the persons who had first returned from Babylon with their oblations to the temple : (chap. vii. :) an account of the reading of the law, the preaching of Ezra, and the effect of these on the people : (chap. viii. :) the appointment and observance of a solemn fast and humiliation of the people, and their renewal of a solemn covenant with Jehovah : (chap. ix., x. :) a record of those who dwelt in Jerusalem and in the other cities : (chap. xi. :) the names of the priests, and the dedication of the wall. (Chap. xii.) The fourth part gives an account of his visit to Babylon, his return to Jerusalem, and the second reformation which was effected mainly by his piety and zeal.

We have in Nehemiah one of the finest instances of piety, patriotism, and public spirit, which the annals of the world can

furnish. His book cannot be carefully read without benefiting alike the head and the heart of the student. It is a rich treasury of noble sentiment, seconded by a holy and zealous example.

The BOOK OF ESTHER is, as regards its place in the sacred canon, the last of the historical books of the Old Testament ; but it is not the last in regard of the chronological order of the events which it narrates. To read this book in its proper order of time and historical connexion, it should be taken immediately after the end of the first part of the Book of Ezra, or at the close of the sixth chapter of that book. This is its proper place ; and the student will derive some important advantages by taking it in that connexion.

The author of this portion of holy scripture is unknown ; and some Christian writers have doubted its canonical authority. This, however, was never the case with the Hebrew church. On the contrary, they have always esteemed it as ranking next to the writings of Moses ; and maintain that if but two portions of the holy scriptures were to be preserved from destruction, they would be the Pentateuch and the Book of Esther.

Formerly, great difference of opinion also prevailed as to the Persian monarch indicated by the name Ahasuerus in this book. But this question has, by the aid of the important additional lights which modern times have cast on this portion of history, been set at rest ; and Artaxerxes Longimanus is now usually regarded as the husband of Esther.

This book relates the elevation of a beautiful Jewess, a captive girl, to be queen of Persia, and the deliverance, by her means, of the whole Jewish people from the destruction plotted against them by the wicked Haman, one of the superior ministers in the king's court ; which destruction, by the overruling of Divine Providence, was made to recoil on himself.

The book may be divided into two parts. The first relates the deposition of queen Vashti, the elevation of Esther, and the important service rendered by Mordecai in disclosing a plot which had been formed against the king's life. (Chap. i., ii.) The second part details the elevation of Haman, the motives which induced him to plot the ruin of the Jews, and the means by which he sought to accomplish his object : (chap. iii. :) the distress of the Jews, and the measures which they concerted for their deliverance : (chap. iv. :) the defeat of Haman's plot against the life of Mordecai, and the death of Haman : (chap. v.—vii. :) the defeat of Haman's plot against the Jews, and the



death of his sons : (chap. viii., ix. 1—15 :) the commemoration of this deliverance by the feast of Purim ; (chap. ix. 20—32 ;) the advancement of Mordecai. (Chap. viii. 1, 2, 15 ; x. 2, 3.)

Having thus reviewed the whole of the historical books of the Old Testament, including the Pentateuch, it may be necessary to remind you, that the world possesses no collateral history of these times. No : although there are still those who sneer at these sacred records, and glory in the wisdom, civilisation, and power of the ancient Gentile nations, there is not to be found a page of authentic ancient history from an uninspired head, to cast light on these remote times. We have, it is true, detached inscriptions on monumental ruins, several catalogues of dynasties and kings, fragments of literary records, and notes respecting different countries made by enterprising travellers in foreign lands, which afford us many important and curious glimpses into the history and condition of the ancient world ; but we have not, before the time of Nehemiah, the account of any nation, nor even any considerable portion of it, written by a native author, preserved to our day. Let infidels, therefore, scoff, and sceptics cavil, as they may : the man who carefully reads this section of holy scripture which we have now considered, will not only know the origin, character, polity, and religion of the Hebrew people, and their history from the beginning of the nation to 400 B.C. ; but he will also know more of the origin of the human race, of the history of mankind in the early ages, and of the history of the great primitive kingdoms which swayed the sceptre of power over the world in ancient times, than all the other books on earth beside can teach him.

It is a remarkable and significant fact, that, as the canon of the sacred narrative closed with Nehemiah, so the first Gentile historian whose works have been preserved to our day arose at the same time. Herodotus, the father of profane history, was contemporary with Nehemiah : so that, when, in the order of Providence, the inspired Hebrew seers ceased to record national annals, the genius and learning of Greece were called into existence to afford to the world the light of subsequent historic truth.

It is not only, however, my dear brethren, as mere history that the contents of these sacred books are urged on your serious attention, and presented as subjects for careful research and devout inquiry. It is rather on account of their bearing and relation to the economy of redemption. Let me,

then, very briefly direct your attention to the important information afforded by this portion of the sacred volume respecting the scheme of redemption. You see here the transgression which "brought death into our world, and all our woe." And you have from this, as a starting-point, a continued series of Divine interpositions, which not only greatly meliorated the condition of the early patriarchs, and brought them into spiritual intercourse with God, and reared up the elect people into a mighty nation by miracles and signs, and the clearly-revealed power of God, with the still more marvellous phenomenon of Jehovah punishing, crushing, dispersing his apostate people, and yet still carrying on his great designs of grace. You see more than all this; namely, that all this bears an immediate relation to the scheme of mercy afterward revealed in the gospel of Christ.

My dear brethren, cleave to these sacred records; cherish the highest views of their truth, inspiration, and spiritual importance. Cast to the winds the blind error of those who would send us to a course of induction to ascertain the meaning of the word of God. Apprehend, in all its fulness, depth, and power, the contents of this sacred inspired history; so will you be the better prepared to go with me, in the next lecture, to a consideration of the contents of the remaining portion of the Old-Testament scriptures.

## LECTURE IV.

### THE POETICAL AND PROPHETICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IMPORTANCE of Poetry, used in the Communication of holy Scripture—The POETICAL BOOKS—THE BOOK OF JOB—Certainty of the Existence of this Patriarch—The Period when he lived—His Country—Analysis of the Book—THE BOOK OF PSALMS—Its Name—Lyrical Nature of these Compositions—The Authors of the Psalms—Their Inscriptions—Divided into five Books—The Origin of these sacred Songs—The peculiar Nature of this Portion of Scripture—Liturgical Character of the Psalms—Importance of studying the Bearing and Authorship of each of them—Classification of the Psalms—Their Importance to Worship in David's Tabernacle—THE BOOK OF PROVERBS—Its Name—Brevity of Expression—This Book contains four Parts or Sections—Cautions as to the Interpretation of the Proverbs—THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES—Curious Information suggested by its Title—Solomon its Author—Scope and Design of the Work—An Analysis of the Book—Key to its Meaning—THE SONG OF SOLOMON—Its general Title—Scope and Design of the Work—Cautionary Observations—THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS—The Design of the prophetic Institute—Qualifications for the prophetic Office—Prophetic Addresses generally delivered orally—Chronology of the Prophets—THE BOOK OF ISAIAH—Its Scope—Analysis of its Contents—THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH—Notices of this Prophet's Ministry and Persecutions—An Arrangement of these Prophecies—THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS—Its Nature and Character—THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL—Account of the Prophet—Analysis of his Predictions—THE BOOK OF DANIEL—His peculiar Position as a Prophet—His historical Work and prophetic Revelations—THE BOOK OF HOSEA—The Prophet and his Writings—THE BOOK OF JOEL—Scope and Analysis—THE BOOK OF AMOS—The Circumstances of this Prophet—Design of his Prophecy—Its Subject Matter—THE BOOK OF JONAH—His History—Missions—Prophecy—and Success—THE BOOK OF MICAH—His History and Prophecy—THE BOOK OF NAHUM—Scope and Nature of the Prophecy—THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK—Peculiar Construction of the Prophecy, and its Substance—THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH—Analysis of the Book—THE BOOK OF HAGGAI—Peculiar Position of this Prophet—Object of the Book—Summary of its Subjects—THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH—Analysis of the Book—THE BOOK OF MALACHI—Its Analysis—CONCLUSION.

WE now enter upon the investigation of a portion of the inspired writings which stands invested with very peculiar interest. Of all the agencies which, from the constitution of our nature, are most efficient in raising human sympathy, rousing intense feeling, and exciting the mind to elevated thoughts and noble deeds, none can surpass poetry. It is therefore worthy of observation, that it has pleased the Inspiring



Spirit to give a large and very important part of the Bible through the medium of this poetic agency.

To this section of holy writ we now invite your serious attention. It consists of five books, which, although they by no means comprise all the poetry contained in the Bible, (it indeed being frequently found in the Pentateuch, and still more abundantly in the writings of the prophets,) are, on account of their being almost wholly composed in Hebrew verse, generally classed together under the common title of **THE POETICAL BOOKS**. They are,—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles, or Song of Solomon; and, although some of them are older than many of the historical books, they are in our Bibles placed in succession between the historical and prophetical books.

The **BOOK OF JOB** is the first of these inspired metrical compositions. In considering this portion of scripture, it is necessary to call attention to the singular fact, that almost every thing connected with it has been violently disputed. Whether such a person as Job ever existed,—to what age or period the contents of the book refer,—who was its author,—and also its canonical authority, scope, and meaning,—have all been the subjects of earnest and continued disputation. It will be necessary to afford the best information in our power respecting these several points.

It has by some writers of note been denied that any such person ever existed, and that the ancient poem bearing his name should be regarded as mythic, allegorical, or fabulous. If it had been necessary, this notion might be abundantly refuted on other grounds; but in the present instance it will be quite sufficient to show that holy scripture distinctly attests the existence and piety of Job. Besides the book before us, the prophecy of Ezekiel does this, by repeatedly asserting, “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.” (Ezek. xiv. 20.) And St. James: “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” (James v. 11.) Now we feel confident that these passages prove, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the certain existence of Job. Noah was a man, Daniel was a man: are these, by the unerring Spirit of God, associated with a myth? Are we taught, in the Bible, of the righteousness of one who never

existed? Impossible! Besides, Job is mentioned in the apocryphal book of Tobit, which was written during the captivity, and was referred to in almost every ancient Arabian tradition.

But if Job did really exist, when did he live? This is an important question, and we will endeavour to give it a clear and full reply. There are several ways of eliciting some information respecting the time of this patriarch. The first is found in the length of his life. We are told that Job lived one hundred and forty years after the termination of his troubles. (Job xlii. 16.) Now this in itself is sufficient to refute the notion that Job was a descendant of Esau. We have no information in the Bible of any persons, after the time of Abraham, having attained the age which Job must have reached. But we need not be satisfied with this general conclusion. In a future Lecture you will be informed of weighty reasons for preferring the chronology of early biblical history which is found in the Septuagint version of the scriptures. If we suppose Job to have married and to have had children at about the same age as other persons living at the same time, we shall obtain a tolerably accurate estimate of the age of Job. As his troubles certainly took place after his eldest son was married, we must endeavour to ascertain his age at this period. If, then, we run our eye over the list of post-diluvian patriarchs according to the Septuagint, we find Salah, who lived four hundred and thirty-three years, the father of his eldest son at one hundred and thirty, and that this son was married at one hundred and thirty-four. Now this patriarch lived after the birth of his grandson one hundred and sixty-five years; Eber, who followed him, one hundred and forty-four; Reu, seventy-seven; and Serug, one hundred and eighty-one. This would lead to the conclusion, that Job lived between Salah and Serug; and if we search the genealogical account given by Moses, we find that Jobab the son of Joktan was contemporary with Reu. When it is further considered, that this Joktan is by the Arabian historians celebrated as the ancient founder of their nation, there can be little doubt that we find here the parentage and the age of Job.

It may be mentioned as a curious fact, that this conclusion, as to the time when Job lived, has obtained a remarkable confirmation. Two constellations, Chima or Taurus, and Chesil or Scorpio, are spoken of in this book, (chap. ix. 9; xxxviii. 31, 32,) as those of spring and autumn. As the present position of each of them is known, astronomers have carefully calculated the time requisite to effect the alteration which has taken place in

their site, and thus traced backward so as to ascertain when they were each in the place described in the Book of Job. This was done, many years since, by two very eminent men, one residing in our own country, and the other in France, who pursued their investigations quite independent of each other; and they both found the time indicated to agree exactly with that in which Reu lived; a fact as singular as it is conclusive.

If necessary, this view might be further supported; but enough has been said to fix the time when Job lived. This also determines his country; for the Arabians were at an early period located in Ausitis or Uz, in Stony Arabia.

The subject of the Book of Job is, therefore, the afflictions of an ancient Arabian prince or emir, who lived in the earliest age of the nation, whilst patriarchal laws, usages, and religion were still maintained.

Much controversy has been occasioned by the uncertainty which exists as to when and by whom this portion of holy scripture was written. The most probable conclusion which all this learning and labour has evolved is, that the book was written soon after the events transpired, most likely by Job himself; and that it was found among the Arabs by Moses during his sojourn in the land of Midian, and translated by him into the language of his countrymen, for their instruction, encouragement, and consolation, during the period of their cruel bondage in Egypt.

The following is a brief analysis of the book:—

The first part is introductory, and contains a short history of the character, circumstances, and afflictions of Job. This portion of the book is written in prose. (Chap. i., ii.)

The second part relates the first controversy between Job and his friends; and comprehends several discourses: The complaint of Job, when, overwhelmed with troubles, and apparently abandoned by God, he descends to language of the deepest despondency, laments that he ever beheld the light, and invokes death as his only refuge. Nothing can excel the boldness and grandeur of some parts of this speech. (Chap. iii.) To this language of despondency Eliphaz replies, reproving the impatience of Job, and intimating that his great sufferings were a punishment for some secret sin. (Chap. iv., v.) Job's cup of agony is now full; and in answering Eliphaz he apologizes for the bitterness of his grief, by the magnitude of his calamities, and prays for death: he is again hurried away by the violence of his emotions, and expostulates with the Almighty; but at length perceiving his irreverence, he prays for forgiveness, and



the termination of his sufferings. (Chap. vi., vii.) Bildad now enters into the debate, and begins his address to Job with provoking cruelty, charging the whole family of Job with great wickedness, because of the manner of their destruction, and impugns the conduct of Job himself in consequence of his being a partaker in the calamity. He then exhorts Job to repent, and to look to God for restoration to health and prosperity. (Chap. viii.) In Job's reply to this cutting address, he evinces a noble greatness of mind, and rises superior to the bitterness of his assailant. He acknowledges the justice and power of God, and his Divine sovereignty, but argues that we are ignorant of his plans of moral government, and contends that his afflictions do not prove his guilt: sinking once more into despair under the weight of his theme, he again wishes for death. (Chap. ix., x.) Zophar then essays to support the cause of his friends. He inveighs with increasing severity against Job, whom he exhorts to repentance as the only means of restoration. (Chap. xi.) Job, harassed by the continual recurrence of unjust accusation, retorts on them with keen sarcasm, challenging their conduct as unjust, and fraught with partial pleading against him, and blaming their pretensions to superior knowledge. He then in a noble address appeals to God, averring his steady hope in a future resurrection. It is worthy of particular observation, that, in this animated and able debate, apparently without any set purpose, the doctrine of a future state is at last referred to as the grand means of solving the difficulties of the providential dispensations of God toward his creatures in this world.

The third part comprises the series of speeches which formed the second controversy, and extends from chapter xv. to the close of chapter xxi.

Eliphaz opens this discussion. He accuses Job of vehemence and vanity; asserts that no man is innocent, and insists that Job's conduct in the debate is sufficient to condemn him. This address concludes with some moral maxims of great beauty and antiquity. (Chap. xv.) Job replies by again bitterly complaining of the reproaches of his friends, renews his appeal to the Almighty, protests his innocency, and, entreating his friends to leave him and return home, he looks to death as the only means of escape from his troubles. (Chap. xvi., xvii.) Bildad follows Job, with his characteristic violence and virulence; at the same time exhorts him to be temperate, insisting that his sufferings were justly inflicted. (Chap. xviii.) Job's reply to Bildad is one of the most brilliant chapters of the book. The

afflicted and crushed patriarch still calls his tormentors his friends, and in the most affecting manner implores their pity in his deep affliction. He then pathetically reviews his great sorrows, describes himself as suffering under the hand of God for purposes altogether mysterious and unknown to him; and then, as if under a sudden burst of inspiration, he breaks out into language expressing the utmost confidence in his Redeemer and a future resurrection. (Chap. xix.) Zophar follows, and does little more than assume the cogency of his former argument, the principal points of which he repeats under a different form; and then, as Job has not made confession of the sins for which he is presumed to be suffering, his friend proceeds, by a series of quotations of ancient apophthegms to exhibit, in bold and terrific pictures, the punishments which are reserved for the impenitent. (Chap. xx.)

Job, still further harassed and distressed by this unjust tirade, appears to collect his utmost intellectual power and energy to refute at the same time the speech of Zophar, and the confidence of his coadjutors. In this effort the afflicted patriarch boldly denies the principle upon which all the arguments of his opponents had been based; namely, that present prosperity is the lot of the good, and present adversity the portion of the wicked. He, on the contrary, maintains, although evidently confounded by the prospect of a providence so mysterious, that here the wicked, and not the righteous, are most generally successful; that this is, in an emphatic sense, their world, where they riot without restraint. He then alludes to the possibility of their being reserved to a future judgment, but contends that here the power of the wicked is so great that none resists their progress, and that, on the contrary, their influence is so extensive that none can resist it during life, and that all tender them respect and attention even in their death. (Chap. xxi.)

The fourth part contains the third debate or controversy, and ranges from chapter xxii. to chapter xxxi. inclusive.

Here, as usual, Eliphaz opens the argument; and, roused by the last effort of Job, he exerts himself to the utmost. It is difficult to conceive of a more artfully contrived, or more sophistical, discourse. In spite of Job's repeated protestations to the contrary, his opponent here charges him with being an advocate for the wicked, by associating wickedness and prosperity together as cause and effect. On the contrary, the speaker appeals to the destruction of the antediluvian world, as a signal proof that God does indeed hate sin and interposes to

punish it; and thus, instead of regarding these Divine judgments as extraordinary, he argues from them as if they were to be regarded as types of his universal providence. Having thus, by implication, included Job in the category of the ungodly, he proceeds to exhort him to repentance and prayer. (Chap. xxii.)

Job, in reply to this crimination, again complains of the cruel perseverance of his professed friends, and renews his earnest desires to find out the Almighty, and to plead his cause before him. He then returns to the argument, and proves, by a great variety of examples, that the providential government of God is at present carried on in a most mysterious manner; that, notwithstanding numerous exceptions, the wicked are generally prosperous, whilst even infants are permitted often to perish nearly as soon as created, and lonely widows suffered to pine in want and misery. At the same time Job maintains, that the eye of God always marks the way of the wicked, who are sometimes (but not generally) cut off by his righteous power. (Chap. xxiii., xxiv.)

Bildad, in attempting an answer to this masterly address, appears to be quite confounded. He reluctantly admits, that the existing state of the world proves that the Divine Ruler of it governs in an incomprehensible manner, and with absolute sway. Yet, although he is to this extent driven from his former position, he pertinaciously maintains that Job must be wicked, as all are so, confirming his view by a further quotation of ancient maxims. (Chap. xxv.)

Job immediately censures the preceding speaker for not acknowledging his error when so clearly convicted of it, and expresses himself as particularly annoyed at his quoting the opinions of the ancients, as though they were entirely on his side; in opposition to which, he recites a long string of traditions of great sublimity and power. Job then resumes his argument, and asserts that, although forsaken and distressed, he has ever laboured to maintain innocency of life. He then ventures to encourage a hope of final deliverance, and forcibly points out the difference between his afflictions and the penal judgments of the wicked, which he describes as overwhelming and irreversible. After a splendid eulogy on wisdom, he passes to a minute review of his own conduct in the various circumstances in which he had been called to act, and investigates his behaviour as a magistrate, husband, father, and master; and is able, in respect of all, conscientiously to justify his conduct, challenging his friends and the world at large to produce publicly an accu-



sation against him. Zophar, who should have followed, declines to do so, and the argument ends. (Chap. xxvi.—xxxii.)

In the fifth part, the parties to this controversy having closed the debate, Elihu, a new speaker, is introduced. He is represented as having carefully listened to all the arguments, and to have studied the several parts with great care and impartiality. Glancing at the general irrelevancy of the arguments which had been urged against Job, and tacitly admitting the propriety of his reasoning; he proceeds to scrutinize his conduct in the course of the controversy, and the moral tendency of his replies; both of which he severely censures. He then exhorts Job to relinquish his present sentiments, to confess his sin, in the hope of restoration to the Divine favour, asserting that submission to God is the great duty of man. He then closes a magnificent address by a most sublime representation of the Divine attributes, especially of the glory, wisdom, and power of God, as evinced in the works of creation.

The sixth part exhibits the whole issue of this wonderful contest.

The utmost efforts of intellect having been employed in this protracted struggle, Jehovah himself appears to deliver judgment, and speaks to Job out of a whirlwind. This address is conceived in the most sublime and magnificent manner. In it the Divine Speaker maintains his supreme sovereignty and universal providence, and avows that all which takes place is ordained as means to an appointed end, and that end the happiness of his creatures. In the developement of this idea, the formation of the world, and the arrangements of universal nature, are described in language that has never been equalled. From this lofty description, the Speaker descends to the providential provision for every living creature, and the wonderful adaptation of their powers to their various circumstances and wants; all which is exquisitely illustrated by a variety of distinct examples drawn from natural history, and painted to the life; the whole issuing in the general conclusion, that God is supreme, must be submitted to and worshipped, his wisdom being incomprehensible, and cannot be arraigned,—his power omnipotent, and cannot be resisted,—his goodness universal, and cannot be denied.

This sublime address is listened to with wonderful emotion. The afflicted patriarch confesses the folly of his arrogance and presumption, and deeply laments his conduct. The confession and penitence of Job are accepted. His three friends are severely reprehended for the harsh judgment they had pronounced

respecting him, and their false and narrow views of Divine Providence. A sacrifice is demanded on their account, which Job is commanded to offer as their intercessor. This being done, the tried patriarch is restored to health and his former state of prosperity, all his property being doubled, and even his family blessings are renewed and enlarged.

I have thought it right to dwell more at length on the analysis of this extraordinary book, than might at first sight appear to be necessary. But the biblical student will find his time and attention well applied in the study of the Book of Job. Here he can learn the doctrines, morals, and religious manners of the patriarchal faith. In this splendid poem we have a clear and ample exhibition of the intelligence, cultivation, and highly civilized condition of the early inhabitants of the world. We have here one of the most wonderful examples of the exercise of the highest intellectual power, employed under the guidance of the most exquisite taste, genius, and art, in the investigation of the most sublime subjects that can engage our mental faculties; namely, the will of God, and the wonderful manifestation of his infinite attributes in the government of mankind. No one can pretend to an acquaintance with the Bible who has not formed a consistent idea of the several parts of the Book of Job.

The BOOK OF PSALMS comes next under consideration. The names given to this collection of Divine songs are peculiarly significant, and deserve attention. The Hebrew title סֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים (*Sepher Tehillim*) signifies "the Book of Hymns" or "Praises," and was given because the greater part of them treat of the praises of God. The English title is derived from the appellation given to this book in the Greek edition of the Septuagint. This is *Ψαλμοί*, simply "The Psalms." There can scarcely be a doubt that this term was adopted, for the same reason which led to the application by us of its derivative "Psalter" to the English version of the book; namely, because most of these compositions were designed to be sung in public worship, and accompanied by instrumental music,—the psaltery being an instrument usually employed for this purpose. This fact, that the Psalms were originally designed as lyrical pieces to be sung in conjunction with musical instruments in worship, which is so fully maintained by the most eminent critics, among whom we reckon Lowth, Herder, Ewald, Tholuck, and others, is decisive as to the admissibility of instruments of music into public worship. The force of ten

thousand arguments falls powerless before such a fact. De Witte, an eminent German critic, has the following observations on this point. The Psalms, he observes, "are lyric in the proper sense; for, among the Hebrews, as among the ancients generally, poetry, singing, and music were united; and the inscriptions to most of the Psalms determine their connexion with music, though in a way not always intelligible to us. Also as works of taste, these compositions deserve to be called *lyric*. The essence of lyric poetry is the immediate expression of feeling; and feeling is the sphere in which most of the Psalms move pain, grief, fear, hope, joy, trust, gratitude, submission to God: every thing that moves and elevates the heart, is expressed in these songs. Most of them are the lively effusions of the excited susceptible heart, the fresh offspring of inspiration and elevation of thought." \*

We can scarcely find a more difficult or disputed question than that which is presented to us in an inquiry into the authorship of the Psalms. This, indeed, involves another point of peculiar interest; namely, the authority of the inscriptions which are prefixed to these sacred pieces. If these could be safely relied on, they would in most instances tell us by whom these several songs were composed; and it cannot be questioned that these titles are very ancient. They existed when the Septuagint translation was made, about 280 B.C., just as we find them in our present Hebrew Bibles; but, on the other hand, it is alleged that either some of these Psalms have been altered, or added to, by subsequent inspired writers, or the titles cannot be depended on, inasmuch as there are references to the captivity in Psalms which are ascribed to David. I think there can be no doubt that more is made of this objection than it merits. Psalm xiv. 7, is, for example, referred to as one of such instances. But it is very manifest that the terms "the captivity of his people," may as reasonably be applied to the effects of Absalom's rebellion as to the Babylonian conquest. It must, however, be admitted, that some of the Psalms do contain passages and forms of speech very much at variance with the inscriptions which they bear. Yet, when it is known that we have good reason to attribute the origin of these inscriptions to a time at least as early as that of Ezra, the judgment to which an eminent critic has arrived on this subject will be received with general acceptance: "On the whole, it seems the part of sober criticism to receive the titles as historically valid, except when we find strong internal evidence against them."

\* Cyclop. Bib Lit., *sub voce*.



The design of these inscriptions is to specify the author, chief singer, the historical subject or occasion, the style of poetry, or the instrument or style of music. Some of them are limited to the mention of one of these particulars; in others, as in Psalm li., several are enumerated.

It is uncertain when and by whom the Psalms were arranged in the order in which we find them in holy scripture. Many suppose that David collected into a book, for the purposes of public worship, such as were composed before and during his time;—but it seems more probable that this was done from time to time by Asaph or his successor, as chief of the singers. Although it is uncertain by whom, or at what period, the Psalms were arranged, it is clear that they were thus placed, and the whole divided into five books, at an early period, as they are found in this state in the Jewish and Syriac copies; and as the same classification is found in the Septuagint, it must have been made previously to B.C. 280.

The first book contains the Psalms as found in our Bible from Psalm i. to xli., inclusive. This is believed to consist wholly of David's songs, his name being prefixed to all but the first, second, tenth, and thirty-third; and there is little doubt that these are rightly ascribed to the same author. This is evidently the first collection that was made, and is by some ascribed to Hezekiah, who is known to have ordered a collection of the Proverbs of Solomon, (Prov. xxv. 1,) and to have commanded the Levites to sing the words of David. (2 Chron. xxix. 30.)

The second book extends from Psalm xlii. to lxxii., and consists mainly of other Psalms of David, with those composed by the sons of Korah. That this collection was separate and distinct from the preceding, is manifest from the fact, that pieces occurring in the first are repeated here with partial alterations. Thus Psalm liii. is the same with Psalm xiv., only that the name of Deity which in the latter is Lord, (*Jehovah*,) in the former is changed to God. (*Elohim*.) In the same manner Psalm lxx. is but a repetition of Psalm xl. 13—17, with the same very singular change in the Divine name.

The third section or book of the Psalms begins with Psalm lxxiii., and extends to Psalm lxxxix., consisting mostly of those composed by Asaph, of whose odes we have here eleven; to which are added three by the sons of Korah, one of Heman's, and one of David's. The date of this collection is supposed to be as late as the time of the captivity, or even of the restoration, if Psalm lxxxv. is correctly referred to that period.

The fourth book commences with Psalm xc., and closes with Psalm cvi. One of these sacred songs is ascribed to Moses, and two to David: the others have no author's name attached to them. The date of the collection is unknown; but it is supposed that it was made with special reference to the service of the temple.

The fifth book begins with Psalm cvii., and extends to the end of Psalm cl. This section contains the Songs of Degrees, which seem originally to have formed a separate section or collection. This book, in all probability, was used for liturgical purposes in the Hebrew worship.

If we investigate, as far as our means will allow, the production of these poetic compositions, the result will cast important light on their nature and character. The number of the Psalms is one hundred and fifty. Of these David and his companions are supposed to have composed about ninety. In the time of Jehoshaphat, four Psalms are supposed to have been produced; about the time of the subversion of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, five; and about the time of the Babylonish captivity, forty. So that, of the whole number, nearly one hundred and forty were produced under the influence of special and peculiar religious excitement. The early part of the reign of David can never be properly regarded but as a season of great religious revival in the Hebrew church; and this period produced nearly two-thirds of the Psalms. The ruin of the Hebrew kingdoms also gave a stimulus to religious feeling; and those times made additions to the number of the sacred songs. The reign of Jehoshaphat was another season of religious quickening: this also furnished its quota, and the times of the captivity and restoration had a similar religious effect on the Hebrew mind: the result was, the contribution of a large addition to the inspired songs of the Hebrew church. During the prevalence of idolatry, the poetic inspiration slumbered; but every incident that called back the people to their allegiance to God served, more or less, to fan the flame of genius, and thus added to the number of those sacred songs.

The peculiar nature of this portion of holy scripture has not received the attention which it merits. It has been often observed, that the Bible, although remarkable for its unity in doctrine and history, is equally so for its great variety in manner of composition. It contains general and national history, and individual biography, prose and poetry, proverbs and ethics, narratives and epistles; but the peculiarity observable in the Book of Psalms is altogether different from all these: it is

found, not in the mere vehicle of language, but in the thoughts, feelings, sentiments, and desires which are here presented in all their living energy, pathos, and power. The grand design of the Bible is to give to mankind a knowledge of spiritual religion. How does the Book of Psalms promote this object? In this peculiar and striking manner:—by imbuing the best thoughts and feelings of the best men, in the purest periods of the Old-Testament church, with the plenary inspiration of the Spirit of God, and then, as they passed forth from sanctified hearts in the burning power of the purest poetry, stereotyping them on the pages of revelation for the benefit of the world in all future ages. Take David as an instance. Whilst a pious and unoffending young man, hunted about on the mountains and deserts of Judea by the cruelty of Saul, he gave vent to the feelings of his heart in songs of prayer, confidence, and praise; and these, it pleased God to pervade with his Holy Spirit, and to preserve for the edification of his church in all ages; so that they form at the same time a pure model of godly experience, and a standard of piety, purity, and faith.

As Wesleyan Methodists, we feel more than ordinary interest in this subject. Much has been said of the vast importance of orthodox liturgies in guarding the church against error, and in maintaining a sound standard of truth; and our religious denomination has been more or less directly censured as defective in this respect. But what, let me ask, was the liturgical bulwark which saved the Hebrew church, so far as it was saved, from corruption? The only answer that can be given is, The Psalms. When, therefore, Wesleyans are upbraided for the absence of a denominational liturgy, let them point to their Hymn-Book, that exhibits one upon the most scriptural model with which any church was ever favoured; one, in fact, as nearly approaching an adaptation of the Psalms to Christian times and experience, as it seems possible to procure from an uninspired source.

It is necessary to warn the youthful student against the error of regarding the Psalms as one book, without reference to the author and object of the several pieces. Of course, this cannot always be obtained; but when it can, it is most important that it should be fully realized, and used to give a definite and forceful meaning to the sacred text. We may quote an instance: the beautiful and instructive Psalm lxxii. can scarcely be read without profit. But when we know that it was composed by David on the inauguration of his son Solomon as king, and survey the aged and pious sovereign surrounded by his coun-



sellors and captains, and all the military and civil authorities of his kingdom, (1 Chron. xxviii.; xxix. 22,) and hear him deliver his inimitable charge to his successor;—and then see him leaving the multitude to their festive joy, whilst he retires to his closet, and, bowing before the Lord, pours out his soul in earnest prayer, saying, “Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness to the king’s son;”—and thus continuing to supplicate blessings on the kingdom and government of Solomon until, under a powerful afflatus of the Holy Ghost, he discerns the more glorious kingdom of Messiah, the Son of David, and his rapt spirit, in the contemplation of the full fruition of all his hopes, exclaims, “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended;”—it will be very obvious, that a consideration of these circumstances cannot fail to invest the contents of this Psalm with an interest which they never could possess if the several sentences of which it is composed were read without any regard to them. It is important, therefore, to ascertain, as far as possible, the author and object of each of the Psalms, in order to a full appreciation of their meaning.

The following arrangement gives a general classification of the Psalms, according to their subject matter.

#### I.—PSALMS PRINCIPALLY SUPPLICATORY.

1. Prayers for pardon of sin: vi., xxv., xxxviii., li., cxxx. Psalms styled “penitential:” vi., xxii., xxxviii., li., cii., cxxx., cxliii.
2. Prayers indicating a deprivation of public worship: xlii., xliii., lxiii., lxxxiv.
3. Prayers exhibiting great dejection of mind under affliction: xiii., xxii., lxix., lxxvii., lxxxviii., cxliii.
4. Prayers supplicating Divine aid, on the ground of integrity and uprightness: vii., xvii., xxvi., xxxv.
5. Prayers expressing trust and confidence in God under affliction: iii., xvi., xxvii., xxxi., liv., lvi., lvii., lxi., lxii., lxxi., lxxxvi.
6. Prayers referring to the afflictions or persecutions of the people of God: xliv., lx., lxxiv., lxxix., lxxx., lxxxiii., lxxxix., xciv., cii., cxliii., cxxxvii.
7. Prayers under affliction generally: iv., v., xi., xxviii., xli., lv., lix., lxiv., lxx., cix., cxx., cxl., cxli., cxliii.
8. Intercessory prayers: xx., lxvii., cxii., cxxxii., cxliv.

#### II.—PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING.

1. Thanksgivings for mercies to particular persons: ix.,

xviii., xxii., xxx., xxxiv., xl., lxxv., ciii., cviii., cxvi., cxviii., cxliv.

2. Thanksgivings for mercies to the Hebrew church: xlv., xlviii., lxv., lxvi., lxviii., lxxvi., lxxxi., lxxxv., xcvi., cv., cxxiv., cxxvi., cxxix., cxxxv., cxxxvi., cxlix.

### III.—PSALMS OF PRAISE AND ADORATION.

1. Acknowledgments of the Divine goodness and mercy: xxiii., xxxiv., xxxvi., xci., c., ciii., cvii., cxvii., cxxi., cxlv., cxlv.

2. Psalms showing forth the glorious attributes of God: viii., xix., xxiv., xxix., xxxiii., xlvii., l., lxv., lxvi., lxxvi., lxxvii., xciii., xc., xcvi., xcvi., xcix., civ., cxi., cxiii., cxiv., cxv., cxxxiv., cxxxix., cxlvii., cxlviii., cl.

### IV.—PSALMS ON MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS.

1. Psalms descriptive of the happiness of the pious, and the misery of the wicked: i., v., vii., x., xi., xii., xiv., xv., xvii., xxiv., xxv., xxxii., xxxiv., xxxvi., xxxvii., l., lii., liii., lviii., lxxiii., lxxv., lxxxiv., xci., xcii., xciv., cxii., cxix., cxxi., cxxv., cxxvii., cxxviii., cxxxiii.

2. The excellence of the Divine laws: xix., cxix.

3. The vanity of human life: xxxix., xlix., xc.

4. The virtue of humility: cxxxi.

### V.—PSALMS MORE DIRECTLY PROPHETICAL.

Psalm ii., xvi., xxii., xl., xlv., lxviii., lxxii., lxxxv., cx., cxviii.

### VI.—HISTORICAL PSALMS.

Psalm lxxviii., cv., cvi.

There is yet another division of the Psalms to which attention should be directed; namely, that a large portion of them were expressly appropriated to be sung during worship at the tabernacle of David on Mount Zion. This sanctuary brings before us one of the most interesting and startling facts in the history of the Hebrew religion. When David had obtained full possession of his kingdom, and had subdued his enemies on every side, so that he dwelt in peace, and had time to direct attention to the civil administration and religious improvement of his people, he found that the ark of God, which had been taken by the Philistines and sent back again to the land of Israel, (2 Sam. vi.; 1 Chron. xiii.) was

resting in the house of Abinadab on the hill, where it had remained for many years. David could not endure that the sacred seat of the Divine Presence, the ark, propitiatory, and cherubim, should continue in a private dwelling. This feeling might be expected, and is in no respect wonderful; but it is remarkable that this pious king did not restore it to the holy of holies of the Mosaic tabernacle, from whence it had been taken, but prepared a tabernacle for its reception on Mount Zion. There seems to be no reasonable doubt, that in this measure David was divinely directed; and, having accomplished his purpose, "he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel." (1 Chron. xvi. 4.) This latter clause is elsewhere rendered "a service of song." (1 Chron. vi. 31.) Of the Levites who had the charge of this duty, Asaph was chief. For the purposes of this worship many of the Psalms are inscribed as being handed to the "chief musician;" and there are reasons for believing that many others not so marked were used for the same purpose. There is a remarkable proof of this in the First Book of Chronicles, (chap. xvi.,) where we have a Psalm which David wrote for the opening service of his tabernacle, and which some critics believe to have been sung at every service, as its manner is obviously liturgical. Yet, although this is not found as a whole in the Book of Psalms, it is there in substance. The fifteen verses which form the commencement of it, are found in a similar position in Psalm cv., and the remainder of it composes Psalm xvi.

The following Psalms are expressly stated to have been appropriated to this service: iv., v., vi., viii., ix., xi., xii., xiii., xiv., xviii., xix., xx., xxi., xxii., xxxi., xxxvi., xl., xli., xlii., xlv., xlv., xlv., xlvii., xlix., li., liii., liv., lv., lvi., lvii., lviii., lix., lx., lxi., lxii., lxiii., lxiv., lxvi., lxvii., lxviii., lxix., lxx., lxxv., lxxvi., lxxvii., lxxx., lxxxi., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxviii., cix., cxxxix., cxl.

On the whole, the Christian believer can scarcely find a portion of scripture more rich in means of spiritual instruction, guidance, and consolation than the Book of Psalms. For this reason, and for many others, this collection of sacred poetry will form a most important subject of study for the Christian preacher. Here, indeed, we have the religion of the heart exhibited in all its living power, depth of feeling, and spiritual purity. These poems are the best exponents of the religion of the Hebrews. No one can understand the faith and practical piety of God's ancient people, without a perfect acquaintance with the Book of Psalms.



We have next in order to direct attention to the Book of PROVERBS.

This book has been uniformly ascribed to Solomon. But it must not from hence be supposed, that the Hebrew king was the immediate author of all these moral maxims: it is far more probable that with many of his own he incorporated aphorisms then in common use, and maxims which had been handed down from remote antiquity.

The name given to this book in our version is a compound of two Latin words, *pro verbis*, literally, "for words," and is generally supposed to have been given to it on account of the brief and sententious character of its composition; a sentence being employed to convey such an amount of instruction as in other circumstances would require an elaborate address,—a long and formal speech. It seems doubtful, however, whether this gives the true origin of the name. The Hebrew word which we render "proverb" (משל) is derived from a root which means, 1. "To resemble, to compare," 2. "To rule;" and signifies primarily a "similitude" or "comparison" of two objects; and this term was probably selected at first on account of the highly figurative language in which oriental proverbs were generally given. Of this we have some striking instances in the inspired book before us; amongst the most remarkable of which the vivid personification of wisdom may be reckoned. Thus, when the royal moralist shows the peace, happiness, and safety which result from wisdom, or true religion, and he says, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" we have a speaking picture instead of a discourse; an expressive and vivid image, instead of a verbal description; and this imagery or similitude is called "proverbs," as it affords a perfect substitute for the extended use of words.

From our version of this book, however, we can form but a slight idea of the remarkable condensation of imagery and thought which the Hebrew original so fully exhibits. We may present two instances for the information of the reader. The verse, "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps," contains in our version twelve words; in the Hebrew it is given in seven. Again: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Here are eighteen words; in the original the sense is expressed in eight. From the remark of Solomon, that a wise man will seek

"To understand a proverb and the interpretation;  
The words of the wise and their dark sayings;"

it may be inferred, that this kind of study formed a prominent portion of the wisdom of that age. This book, therefore, forms another instance of the wise and gracious provision which God has evinced in the revelation of his will to mankind.

It should also be observed, that we are nowhere told that Solomon wrote these proverbs, but that he *spoke* them; and it seems questionable whether they did not make a part of *viva voce* instructions delivered by Solomon to his people. However this may be, it is certain that the book, as we now have it, was not wholly written and arranged by Solomon. Dr. John Mason Good has divided the Book of Proverbs into four parts, or sections; "each of which," he observes, "is distinguished both by an obvious introduction, and a change of style and manner, though its real method and arrangement seem, hitherto, to have escaped the attention of our commentators and interpreters."

The first part extends from chapter i. to chapter ix.

The sacred poet here seems to aim at the guidance and instruction of persons in early life, before they have fairly selected their course of action. To save such from delusive and destructive error, and to guide them to the attainment of the greatest good, the sacred writer personifies a course of piety, under the form of wisdom. Vice is consequently exhibited, not only as dangerous and debasing, but as the height of folly, the extreme of idiotcy and infatuation; whilst, on the other hand, true piety is set forth with all the attractions of dignity, safety, honour, and wisdom.

The second part comprises from chapter x., to chapter xxii. 16.

This section is headed with the title, "The Proverbs of Solomon," and contains brief weighty sentences adapted for persons who have reached manhood, and entered on the active duties of life. They accordingly treat of the various duties of man towards God and towards his fellow-men in every station of life, and refer to almost every variety of circumstance and condition.

The third part extends from chapter xxii. 17 to chapter xxiv. This contains miscellaneous proverbs, principally referring to rich men, and those moving in elevated situations in society.

The fourth part contains a kind of appendix to the book, collected and arranged by different persons after the death of Solomon.

The first section comprises a collection of proverbs of Solomon which seems to have been made in the time of Hezekiah. These are generally short and unconnected, and a few of them appear

to be repetitions of such as are to be found in the earlier parts of the book.

The second section contains moral sayings and advices given by Agur, the son of Jakeh, to his friends Ithiel and Ucal.

The third section records the admonitions given to king Lemuel by his mother, a wise and pious queen.

Scarcely any part of the Old Testament has received more abundant confirmation by being quoted in the New, than the Book of Proverbs. In seventeen places in the apostolical epistles do we find the Proverbs cited.

This book should be carefully studied by every preacher. But in making these beautiful and weighty moral precepts the foundation of gospel sermons, care should be taken to avoid giving to such texts either an allegorical or evangelical meaning which they were never intended to convey. It cannot be doubted, that in some of these sentences deep spiritual religion is purposely set forth; but it is equally certain, that, in the great majority of cases, the meaning is limited to a pure and elevated morality. It is, however, necessary, perhaps, to guard this statement; for, by many persons, morality, instead of being regarded as an important element of religion, is frequently considered as a mere outward course of action opposed to, rather than resulting from, a change of heart. The Book of Proverbs teaches a morality of the first kind; and insists on the knowledge of God and the fear of the Lord as essential to consistent conduct. Yet texts of this kind have frequently been made to speak more fully of New-Testament privilege and blessing than is consistent with their strict and proper meaning.

ECCLESIASTES is always reckoned as the fourth of the poetical books of the Bible, although serious objections have been made to the uniformity of its poetical character. It is perhaps more correct to say, with a great critic, that "it is a philosophical discourse written in a rhetorical style, and plentifully interspersed with verses:" which latter feature has led to its being reckoned as one of the poetical books.

The name given to this portion of holy scripture suggests interesting inquiry. First, it signifies "the convener of an assembly," or the person who addresses it, and is correctly rendered "teacher" or "preacher." It may consequently be fairly questioned, whether the use of this term does not indicate that, during the zenith of Hebrew civilization, learning, and religion, discourses of a similar kind were not frequently delivered for the edification of the people. If so, this piece, being pre-eminent on account of its Divine inspiration, has been



received into the Old-Testament canon of the sacred scriptures. It is, further, a fact which calls for observation, that this name in the original language is feminine. This circumstance, which has led to numerous fanciful conjectures, is satisfactorily solved by the reflection, that the speaker appears in the person of wisdom; and in accordance with this, he assumes a form of appellation in agreement with such personification.

Arguments of some weight have been adduced, to show that Solomon, to whom the Book of Ecclesiastes is generally ascribed, was not its author. These are mainly derived from the language of the composition, which, it has been alleged, is of a much later date than the time of Solomon. These objections were a few years since urged with great vehemence; but more careful and profound critical investigation has proved that they are not so conclusive as at first supposed, and that the difficulties which still remain are by no means sufficient to set aside the evidence that attributes the work to the pen of Solomon.

The scope and design of this book are very manifest: It is an elaborate philosophical inquiry into the supreme good of man; its object being to exhibit that course which, in all the different relations of life, and all the various circumstances of humanity, is most conducive to the best interests of mankind. This is, in fact, formally propounded as the purpose of the author: "What is that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life." (Chap. ii. 3.)

In order to see the manner and force of the writer's argument, it will be necessary to give a brief analysis of the book, which is divided into two parts.

The first contains a proof of the vanity of all earthly pursuits, acquirements, and pleasures. (Chap. i.—vi. 10.)

1. The vanity of all human things. (Chap. i. 2.)

2. The changeable nature of all earthly things. (Verses 3—11.)

3. Unsatisfactory result of laborious investigations into the ways and works of man. (Verses 12—18.)

4. Luxury and pleasure yield only vanity and vexation of spirit. (Chap. ii. 1—11.)

5. Although there is real worth in wisdom, yet as wise men and fools both die, learning is but vanity. (Verses 12—17.)

6. The vanity of human labour. (Verses 18—23.)

7. Sensual pleasures result in vanity. (Verses 24—26.)

8. Though there is a time for every human pursuit, they are all unprofitable and vain; but the counsels of God are immutable. (Chap. iii. 1—14.)

9. The vanity of human labour shown by the wickedness prevailing in courts of justice, contrasted with the righteous judgment of God. (Verses 15—17.)

10. Though life is vanity, as men die as well as beasts, the destiny of the spirit of man is altogether different from that of beasts. (Verses 18—22.)

11. Vanity is increased by oppression. (Chap. iv. 1—3.)

12. The vanity of prosperity. (Verse 4.)

13. The vanity of folly, or preferring the world to wisdom. (Verses 5, 6.)

14. Vanity of covetousness. (Verses 7, 8.)

15. Notwithstanding the benefits of society, dominion and empire are but vanity. (Verses 9—16.)

16. Human error and frailty often render Divine worship vain and unprofitable. (Chap. v. 1—7.)

17. The vanity of murmuring at injustice, since it is observed by God. (Verses 8, 9.)

18. Riches are vanity, and should therefore be enjoyed in moderation. (Verses 10—20.)

19. Vanity of avarice. (Chap. vi. 1—9.)

The second part exhibits the nature, excellence, and beneficial effects of wisdom, or real religion. (Chap. vi. 12 ; xii. 14.)

1. As all human designs, labours, and enjoyments are vain, what is supremely good for man? (Chap. vi. 10—12.) The following sections reply to this inquiry :—

2. The advantage of character and reputation. (Chap. vii. 1.)

3. Afflictions improve the heart and exalt the character of the wise. (Verses 2—10.)

4. The excellence of wisdom. (Verses 11—14.)

5. An objection stated and answered. (Verse 15—viii. 7.)

6. The evil of wickedness shows the advantage of true wisdom. (Chap. viii. 8—13.)

7. Another objection, with its answer. (Verse 14—ix. 1.)

8. A further objection answered. (Chap. ix. 2—x. 15.)

9. The evils of gluttony and drunkenness ; (chap. x. 16, 17 ; ) and of sloth. (Verse 18.)

10. The power of wealth. (Verse 19.)

11. An exhortation against speaking evil of sovereigns or rich men. (Verse 20.)

12. In the exercise of prudence and diligence, men must commit the issues to the Divine decision. (Chap. xi. 1—6.)

13. The sum of vanity. (Verses 7, 8.)

14. Exhortation to rejoice with moderation. (Verses 9, 10.)

15. An exhortation to early piety. (Chap. xii. 1—7.)

## 16. The conclusion. (Verses 8—14.)

From this sketch it will be seen, that the author of this book regarded real religion as synonymous with wisdom. Overlooking this essential principle of interpretation, many learned men have fallen into the most strange errors respecting this portion of scripture. Here wisdom means the spiritual and religious regulation of the whole mind, rather than any intellectual effort or acquirement. This forms the key to the entire argument, and must be constantly kept in view, in order to any consistent apprehension of its bearing and conclusion.

The SONG OF SOLOMON is the last of the poetical books of holy scripture. It is usually called Canticles, or the Song of Songs, as is generally supposed, on account of its superior beauty and excellence. Perhaps no portion of the Bible has obtained more notice, or called forth greater difference of opinion, than this. Its canonical authority has been doubted, both in ancient and modern times; but the fact of its recognition as a part of sacred scripture by the uninterrupted current of Jewish and Christian antiquity, supported as this is by strong internal evidences of authenticity, sufficiently attests its sacred character and origin.

The great question respecting this part of scripture has reference to its scope, object, and design. On this subject two principal opinions have obtained, both of which have been greatly modified and varied by different learned men. The views referred to are the following: 1. That this book is a poetic celebration of Solomon's marriage, a vivid exhibition of the chaste and intense love subsisting between him and his bride. 2. That it is designed to set forth a more important and spiritual sense, by exhibiting the love of God to the soul, or the holy union subsisting between Christ and his church.

After much consideration, I incline to the opinion, that both these views are to some extent correct; that, in fact, this impassioned celebration of the nuptials of the pious young Hebrew monarch was so overruled by the Holy Spirit, and so imbued with a deeper and more spiritual import, as to convey to the church in all ages a beautiful exhibition of the union subsisting between Christ and his church. As in Psalm lxxii., David, although beginning to pray for Solomon, had his mind carried onward and upward until his rapt spirit was lost in the glories of Messiah's kingdom; so the inspired author of this poem appears to have been carried above his immediate object, and to have shown forth the blessedness and beauty of Christ's union with his people.



If it be objected, that "this is a New-Testament doctrine, only fully revealed in the last and best dispensation of grace," it may be replied, that, although the church is in the New Testament most emphatically called "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and his love for it is most expressly set forth under the terms of conjugal relationship; yet the same truth is essentially taught in the Old Testament, and indeed was announced about the time of Solomon. In Psalm xlv. this is unquestionably done; and the same thing is repeated in Isaiah,—

"For thy Maker is thine husband;  
Jehovah God of hosts is his name." (Isai. liv. 5.)

Again:—

"For as a young man weddeth a virgin,  
So shall thy Restorer wed thee;  
And as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride,  
So shall thy God rejoice in thee." (Isai. lxii. 5.)

A careful consideration of this sublime poem will lead to the appreciation of many beautiful passages which, regarded in this sense, are full of important instruction and consolation. But, generally speaking, this portion of scripture is not best adapted for the basis of pulpit discourses. The frequent use of it for that purpose is likely to lead young men into a fanciful mode of exposition, which cannot be too much deprecated. No analysis of this book can be given which is likely to be useful to local preachers generally.

We have now to consider another and very important part of Old-Testament scripture,—the PROPHETICAL BOOKS. The writers of these scriptures were called "prophets," and their works *prophetical*, not because the most prominent and remarkable element of their office was to predict the certain occurrence of future contingent events; for, although the word is almost exclusively used in this sense by us, it has been clearly shown by learned investigation, that the Hebrew term which we translate "prophet," cannot be limited in its meaning to the prediction of future events, but must rather be understood as applying to persons speaking in the name, by the authority, and under the influence, of God. We have this sense clearly shown in what the Lord says to Moses respecting Aaron. (Exod. vii. 1.) But as the prediction of future events was one of the principal duties of their office, the word has been with us generally limited to this meaning. It must not, however, be supposed from hence, that these books simply contain a series of predictions.

On the contrary, the prophetic institute among the Hebrews appears to have been raised mainly for the purpose of bringing the people more immediately into contact with the Divine will and with Divine influence. The literary productions of the prophets are therefore found frequently to contain not only sketches of history, but earnest and impassioned denunciations against sin, and frequent and fervent exhortations to repentance and amendment of life. The term "prophet" is, indeed, of very general signification, and obtained amongst the ancient Heathens as well as among the Hebrew people. To what extent the Gentile prophets were inspired by the Spirit of God, we have no means of determining; but it would be clearly impossible to maintain in the world such an universal and prevalent opinion of the inspiration of men, if no substantial evidence of their superhuman powers had been evinced. Holy scripture brings under our notice but one of these men, and he one whose covetous heart loved the wages of iniquity; yet Balaam delivered some of the most glorious prophecies contained in the sacred record. And we find that St. Paul does not hesitate to apply the term to a Greek poet. (Titus i. 12.) Acting on this apparent similarity, Augustine says, the prophets were the philosophers, divines, instructors, and guides of the Hebrews. It would have been much more accurate to say, that some of the philosophers of the Gentile nations held a position very analogous to that sustained by the Hebrew prophets.

The vocation of the prophets was twofold: first, to explain and enforce the moral precepts of the law, to lay its spiritual requirements on the hearts of the people, and to maintain its vital spirit in constant and vigorous influence on the public mind; and, secondly, to give forth those expanding and enlightening views of the old economy, in connexion with a constant series of wonderful predictions, and revelations of the promised glory of gospel times, which were designed and adapted to prepare the Hebrew mind for the abrogation of the Mosaic economy, and the introduction of the kingdom of Christ.

That these were the great designs of the prophetic institute, will be apparent from the following considerations: The Hebrew prophet was required to be a holy man. They were "holy men of God" who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i. 21.) I am well aware, that instances may be cited as exceptions to this rule. But, however it was with Gentile prophets, or with a case like that of king Saul, I am fully persuaded that in respect of those who were called to

speak and to write the mind of God to his ancient people, Isaiah must be taken as a type of their experience and state of mind. His "iniquity was taken away and his sin purged," in a manner which clearly showed that the spiritual process was absolutely necessary to the proper discharge of the functions of the prophetic office. And if this was necessary in his case, it would be equally needful in that of others.

Besides personal piety, it was required that the prophet should speak in the name of the true God,—the everlasting Jehovah; and that the predicted event should actually come to pass. (Deut. xviii. 20.) In many important instances, where the prophecy referred to very distant times, this test could not be applied during the life-time of the prophet; but it appears generally, that those called to sustain this high office, and to predict remote events, were also frequently commissioned to foretell those which soon afterwards came to pass; and that the accomplishment of these attested the valid vocation of the prophet. (Deut. xviii. 22; 1 Kings xxii. 1—27.) A prophet was also required to keep his addresses in strict accordance with the law, which was uniformly held to be the religious and civil statute code of the Hebrews. Lastly, the prophets were expressly called to enjoin repentance, and only to promise prosperity on compliance with this requirement.

There can be little doubt that the prophetic addresses were generally delivered orally to the people, although there appears reason for believing that this practice was not universal. Yet, when it was observed, it seems that these addresses were frequently written soon afterward and circulated among the people. Isaiah and Jeremiah quote Micah; Daniel had read Jeremiah; and Zechariah supposes the productions of the earlier prophets to be well known.

It will materially assist the student in his reading of these inspired works, to have them placed before him in chronological order. The prophetic writings which form a part of holy scripture have been thus arranged:—

Class I.	{	Jonah .....B.C. 856	To Israel and Nineveh.
One Prophet.	{	(Between)	
	{	Amos .....B.C. 810—785	
Class II.	{	Isaiah ..... 810—698	To the Kingdom of Judah.
Four Prophets.	{	Hosea ..... 810—725	
	{	Joel ..... 810—660	
	{	Micah ..... 758—699	To Israel and Judah.
	{	Nahum ... 720—698	
Class III.	{	Zephaniah. 640—609	To Judah.
Five Prophets.	{	Jeremiah... 628—586	
	{	Habakkuk 612—593	



Class IV.	{ Daniel .....B.C. 606—534	Babylon and Susa.
Three Prophets.	{ Obadiah ... 588—583	Against Edom.
	{ Ezekiel ... 595—536	Chaldea.
Class V.	{ Haggai ... 520—518	To the Hebrews after their return.
Three Prophets.	{ Zechariah . 520—518	
	{ Malachi ... 436—420 }	

Of these the first was specially called to be the instrument of a wonderful work of grace in the Assyrian capital. The second class of four prophets arose in one year, that by their united ministrations they might check the progress of idolatry, then rapidly rising into influence. The next class ministered throughout the ensuing two hundred years, and before the ruin of the kingdom of Judah. The fourth class prophesied during the continuance of the captivity, and the last after the restoration of the Hebrews to their own land. In our notice of the prophetic books, we shall take them in the order in which they stand in the Bible ; while the above table will show their proper chronological position.

The BOOK OF ISAIAH is, according to our Bible, the first in order of the prophetic books. This is perhaps owing as much to the sublimity and importance of the revelations it contains, as to their great extent. Nothing is certainly known respecting the lineage or personal history of this prophet. An ancient tradition says that he was of the blood-royal of the house of David.

The scope of this book, and the object intended in its production, seems to be threefold : 1. To exhibit in the clearest and strongest manner the irreligion, impiety, and apostasy of the whole Hebrew people, more especially of those in the kingdom of Judah ; and, as well, the prevailing abominations of many Gentile nations ; denouncing against all sinners, of every kind, the most fearful judgments and the severest punishments. 2. To invite all to repentance, without distinction of nation or country. Jews and Gentiles are alike called to reformation of life, by numerous and earnest promises of pardon and mercy. It may be observed here, that Babylon seems to be an exception to this gracious overture. As if the cup of that people's iniquity was full, no distinct announcement of mercy is mingled with the revelations of wrath directed against them. 3. To afford comfort and consolation to the truly pious, whilst exposed to the evils denounced against the wicked, by prophetic promises of the true Messiah. These are so numerous and minutely descriptive, that they set forth the more prominent features

of the Redeemer's character, miracles, sufferings, and death, with the force and exactitude of actual history. Nor are the spiritual blessings of the gospel, and the glories of Messiah's kingdom, less vividly revealed in these wonderful prophecies. These objects are carried out in the sixty-six chapters of which this book is composed, and which contain some of the most important and magnificent revelations ever made from the mind of God to the children of men.

The first difficulty presented by this book, respects the portion which ought to be placed first in order as the beginning of these prophetic revelations. It has been alleged, with great force of reason, that the sixth chapter is so clearly descriptive of the calling of Isaiah to the prophetic office, that it ought to be placed at the beginning of the book; and this was regarded by the Rev. George Townsend as so conclusive, that, in his chronological arrangement of the Old Testament, he has placed the sixth chapter immediately after the first verse of the first chapter. And we should follow this example very readily, had we not good reason for placing the delivery of some of the addresses earlier than "the year in which king Uzziah died." It seems therefore most reasonable to conclude, that the preceding five chapters contain discourses which were delivered in the latter years of Uzziah's reign, whilst Isaiah exercised his vocation as a prophet; but that, in the last year of that king, this favoured servant of the Lord was called into more intimate and sanctified union with his Master, and prepared for taking that distinguished position as an inspired seer which his further revelations so fully display.

This vision, however, is specially remarkable as affording, for the first time in Hebrew history, an animated exhibition of the typical furniture of the inner sanctuary. Prior to this time, the propitiatory and cherubim are represented as curious carvings, and metallic typical emblems. But now they appear instinct with life. The veil of the temple is removed, the mercy-seat is exalted as a lofty throne, the cherubim appear as living creatures, and the Shekinah of God is manifested in the glory of its proper Personality, the Lord's Christ. (John xii. 41.) But this is not the whole: it is but a small part of the important information afforded by this wonderful revelation. We not only see these typical things in all their living reality, but also in the discharge of their true and proper evangelical functions. The vision of Christ, in all his essential holiness, deeply convinces even the prophet of his sinfulness and impurity. The living cherubim as the appointed agency in the work of sal-

vation, apply the atonement from the burning altar; sin is forgiven, iniquity is cleansed, and the servant of God, "made willing in the day of His power," is sent forth on his mission of mercy and judgment to mankind. Thus the most sacred Old-Testament types, for the first time, merge into their New-Testament and evangelical antitypes, and exhibit their real nature and design.

We must now direct attention to the contents of this remarkable portion of holy scripture. It comprises six parts or sections.

The first part contains three discourses delivered in the latter years of Uzziah's reign. (Chap. i.—v.)

1. The first discourse is contained in the first chapter, and is entirely separate in sense and connexion from what follows. It pictures in the most vivid colours the decay of vital piety, the prevalence of corrupt manners, the alienation of the people from God, followed by grievous threatenings to the impenitent, and powerful exhortations to repentance, and gracious promises of seasons of blessing when the people, alarmed by the just judgments of God, shall have turned from their evil ways. The whole chapter, with respect to the images, sentiments, and style, affords a beautiful example of the prophet's powerful and elegant manner of writing.

2. The second discourse of this part (chap. ii.—iv.) is supposed to have been delivered about the close of Uzziah's reign; although some attribute it to the time of his son and successor Jotham. Probably the true key to the difficulty is found in the fact, that Jotham administered the government of the kingdom for six years before the death of his father, who was, during the whole of that period, confined to his house by leprosy; and that these prophecies were then delivered. This sermon contains the following subjects: (1.) A splendid prophecy of Messiah's kingdom. (Chap. ii. 1—5.) (2.) A prediction of the punishment of the unbelieving Jews for their idolatry, vain-confidence, and faithlessness, and the destruction of idolatry by the kingdom of Messiah. (Verses 6—22.) (3.) In a brilliant prophecy of the calamities which would result from the Babylonish invasion and captivity, with a particular enumeration of the distresses which would be felt by the proud and luxurious ladies of Jerusalem. (Chap. iii. ; iv. 1.) (4.) A promise to the pious remnant (who should escape ruin in this time of tribulation) of future protection and blessing. (Chap. iv. 2—6.)

3. The third discourse, like the first, has no connexion with what precedes or follows it, and, like it, also conveys a severe



reproof to the Hebrews for their irreligion and great wickedness; and not only does this in more severe language, but contains more explicit declarations of the impending Babylonish invasion. (Chap. v.)

The second part contains a series of four discourses, delivered during the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz. (Chap. vi. 12.)

1. The first of these details the wonderful vision of Isaiah in the sanctuary, and his more especial consecration to the service of God. This occurred in "the year that king Uzziah died."

2. The second of these discourses opens with an historical sketch of the occasion of the prophecy, in the combination of Syria and Israel against Judah and the house of David; (chap. vii. 1—3;) which is followed by a prophetic declaration of the utter failure of this confederacy, the total ruin of Israel, and the birth of Messiah of a virgin. (Verses 4—17.) Then follows a detail of the calamities which would fall upon Judah by the Assyrians, whom Ahaz, in his faithlessness, had engaged to help him against the combined forces of Syria and Israel. (Chap. vii. 17—viii. 10.) To this succeed various admonitions and threatenings; (chap. viii. 11—ix. 1;) after which, this address concludes with a noble prophecy of the restoration of prosperity to the people of God, primarily referring, probably, to the days of Hezekiah. (Chap. ix. 2—6.)

3. The third discourse of this section (chap. ix. 8—x. 4) contains a distinct prophecy, in a separate and complete poem, remarkable for the regularity of its disposition, and the elegance of its plan. It seems to have no connexion with the matter which precedes or follows it. The opening passage (chap. ix. 7) forms the title or introduction; then follow four regular stanzas, to each of which is added a distich consisting of a repetition of the same words. (Chap. ix. 8—11, 12—16, 17—20; x. 1—4.)

4. The last discourse of this part predicts the invasion of Sennacherib, and the destruction of his army; (chap. x. 5—xi.;) which temporal salvation is followed, according to the usual method of this prophet, by a display of the spiritual deliverance which by God's Messiah shall be wrought out for mankind. (Chap. xii.)

The third part comprises many prophecies against surrounding Gentile and idolatrous nations, especially the Babylonians, Assyrians, Philistines, Egyptians, Tyrians, &c. These are detailed in nine prophetic poems or discourses. (Chap. xiii.—xxii.)

1. The first of these contains a complete and glowing prediction of the ruin of Babylon. This consists of two parts: the first,

says Lowth, "is one of the most beautiful examples that can be given of composition, variety of imagery, and sublimity of sentiment and diction, in the prophetic style." (Chap. xiii.—xiv. 3.) The second part of this poem is a magnificent ode, according to the same critic, of "supreme and singular excellence." (Chap. xiv. 4—23.)

2. The second of these discourses exhibits a brief but severe prophetic denunciation against the Philistines, the accomplishment of which is recorded in 2 Kings xviii. 8. (Verses 29—32.)

3. The third discourse is a prediction against the Moabites, which was delivered in the first year of Hezekiah's reign, and was fulfilled three years afterward by the army of Shalmanezer. (Chap. xv., xvi.)

4. The fourth discourse of this section is a prophecy against Damascus or the kingdom of Syria, of which it was the capital. This was probably delivered in the beginning of the reign of Ahab, and fulfilled when Tiglath-pileser took Damascus. (2 Kings xvi. 9.) The last three verses of this chapter (xvii. 12—14) do not seem to be a part of this prophecy, but rather to describe the formidable invasion and sudden ruin of some other power, probably that of Sennacherib.

5. The fifth discourse is exceedingly obscure: it has been ascribed variously, by eminent critics, to the Assyrians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians. (Chap. xviii.)

6. The sixth discourse is a prophecy against Egypt. (Chap. xix., xx.)

7. The seventh discourse contains a prediction of the capture of Babylon by the Medes and Persians. (Chap. xxi. 1—10.) The remainder of the chapter refers to the Edomites.

8. The eighth discourse is a prophecy against Jerusalem, and seems to refer to both the invasion of Sennacherib and the assault of Nebuchadnezzar. (Chap. xxii.)

9. The ninth discourse describes the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, its restoration, and the conversion of the Tyrian people. (Chap. xxiii.)

The fourth part contains a prophecy of the great calamities which should fall on the Jewish people, the preservation of a remnant, and their restoration to their country, and the destruction of their enemies. (Chap. xxiv.—xxxv.) It is comprised in four discourses.

1. The first of these describes the desolations brought upon the land of Judea, as a punishment for the sins of its inhabitants; the complete subversion of the Hebrew throne and polity by the Chaldeans; (chap. xxiv. 1—22;) the restoration of the Jews,

and their thanksgiving for the destruction of their enemies. (Chap. xxiv. 23—xxv. 5.) The prophet then announces the establishment of the gospel economy, with all its rich amount of blessing. (Chap. xxv. 6—12.) Then follows a beautiful hymn, in which the restoration of Israel is compared to a resurrection from the dead. (Chap. xxvi.) Afterward the utter ruin of Babylon is more particularly detailed, and the blessings which would result therefrom to the people of God. (Chap. xxvii.) The following chapter threatens the ten tribes, and then proceeds to show the declension of piety in Judah; after which, to the end of the discourse, we have a recital of the nature, measure, and design of God's dealings with his people. (Chap. xxvii.)

2. The second discourse of this section contains a prophecy addressed both to the men of Israel and the people of Judah. The destruction of the former is clearly announced. (Chap. xxviii. 1—5.) After which, the prophecy is directed against Judah and Benjamin: it commences with a favourable exhibition of their state under Hezekiah, but soon changes to reproofs and threatenings for their sin.

3. The third discourse predicts the invasion of Sennacherib, the terrible distress which it occasioned during its continuance, and the sudden and immediate deliverance which the Lord wrought out for his people. These prophecies are mingled with many reproofs for the sin and ignorance of the people, and for their vain reliance on Egypt, with promises of future seasons of blessing. (Chap. xxix.—xxxiii.)

4. The fourth discourse contains one entire prophecy, delivered in a complete, regular, and beautiful poem; and consists of two parts. The first contains a denunciation of vengeance against the enemies of the Lord's people; (chap. xxxiv. 1—14;) the second, the flourishing condition of the people of God after these judgments shall have been executed. It is clear, from the whole scope of this, that it refers mainly to the blessings of the gospel. (Chap. xxxv.)

The fifth part contains the historical portion of this book.

It opens with a narrative of the invasion of Sennacherib, and of the miraculous destruction of his army. (Chap. xxxvi.) This is followed by an account of Hezekiah's prayer, and the gracious answer which it received. (Chap. xxxvii.) We then have the particulars of Hezekiah's sickness, recovery, and thanksgiving. (Chap. xxxviii.) And, lastly, the embassy from Babylon and its consequences. (Chap. xxxix.)

The sixth part comprises a wide range of prophetic revelation,



extending from the restoration of the Hebrews from the Babylonish captivity, to the end of the Christian dispensation. It contains twelve discourses.

1. The first of these describes the restoration from Babylonish captivity; the preparations for the appearance of Messiah; the infinite superiority of Jehovah to idols; and the encouragement which the Jews had to expect deliverance. This is shown with unequalled majesty and sublimity of language. (Chap. xl.) Then follows a prediction of the martial power of Cyrus, and of his victorious conquests; after which the Jews are encouraged, by assurances of the omnipotence and omniscience of Jehovah; with a further prophetic reference to the conquests of Cyrus. (Chap. xli.)

2. The second discourse exhibits the person, character, and office of Messiah; the communication of gospel blessings to the Gentiles; the destruction of Babylon, and the return from the captivity, are again referred to, as the means of showing forth gospel times and blessings; whilst the guilt of those who reject the Messiah is vividly described. The prophet then passes to the folly of idolatry, challenging its advocates to show one instance of the omniscience of their false deities; after which the address closes with an exhortation to repentance. (Chap. xlii., xliii.)

3. The third discourse opens with a glorious promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by a further exposure of the folly of idolatry; (chap. xliv. 1—20;) the Divine supremacy is then again asserted and illustrated by the predicted fulfilment of what had been prophesied respecting Cyrus, who is now expressly named. (Verses 21—28.) The vocation and commission of the Persian hero follows, accompanied by a detail of the consequences of his triumphs. (Chap. xlv. 1—19.) The prophet then calls upon all to forsake idolatry, and proceeds to announce the superior blessings of the gospel.

4. The fourth discourse predicts the carrying away of the idols of Babylon, and the folly of worshipping them is strongly contrasted with the service of Jehovah. (Chap. xlvi. 1—13.) Divine judgments on the Chaldeans are further denounced. (Chap. xlvii.)

5. The fifth address contains a severe reproof of the Jews for their infidelity and idolatry, and predicts their deliverance from the Babylonish captivity. (Chap. xlviii.)

6. The sixth discourse consists of two parts: the first contains a vivid representation of the Messiah in his distinct and proper Personality, and his appointment to be the Redeemer of both

Jews and Gentiles. The second part exhibits the desolate condition of the Jews during the captivity, with the Lord's interposition on their behalf, and for the ruin of their enemies. (Chap. xlix.)

7. The seventh discourse is very similar in subject and manner to the preceding. Messiah is here set forth in his great power to redeem; the sin of those who, rejecting him, trust in their own devices, is fully exhibited; the restoration from Babylonish captivity is again promised; and the ultimate communication of gospel blessings announced. (Chap. l.—lii. 1—12.)

8. The eighth discourse is a truly wonderful prophecy of the humiliation and sufferings of Messiah, unequalled even on the pages of revelation. His unpretending and unpromising appearance, the vicarious nature of his sufferings and death, and his subsequent exaltation, triumph, and glory, are exhibited with a minuteness of detail and a force of language which gives unparalleled perspicuity to the prophecy. Here, indeed, we seem to have all the information given by prophecy of the person, the sufferings, the work, and the glory of Messiah concentrated into the most harmonious and complete portraiture. (Chap. lii. 13—liii.)

9. The ninth discourse gives a vivid description of the blessings which should come on the Jewish people after their restoration from Babylonish captivity; and the prophet is thence led out to a prophetic account of the extension of the church when Jews and Gentiles shall be converted to God. (Chap. liv., lv.)

10. The tenth discourse is a brief but earnest invitation to the enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel, which are exhibited as open to all. (Chap. lvi. 1—8.)

11. The eleventh discourse is a detailed exhibition of the numerous and aggravated sins of the Jews, and the terrible punishments which they brought down upon the nation. It seems uncertain as to what period of Hebrew history these predictions are to be referred: most probably they are intended to describe that general declension which, after a while, followed the restoration, and continued until the time of Christ. The whole is beautiful and full of force; but the fifty-ninth chapter in particular is most remarkable for regularity of structure, beauty and force of imagery, and fidelity and minuteness of graphic description: it is, indeed, "quite in the best style of Isaiah." (Chap. lvi. 9—lix.)

12. The twelfth and last of these discourses commences with chapter lx., and goes to the end of the book. In the preceding

discourses the prophet—having repeatedly and fully shown that the national pre-eminence of Israel was not to be perpetual, that the loss of it was the natural consequence and righteous retribution of iniquity, and that their loss of this position did not involve the destruction of the true church or the spiritual Israel,—now proceeds to show that to this true and spiritual Israel the approaching change in the temporal position of the Hebrews would be a glorious and a blessed one. The introduction of the gospel is consequently described as the rising of a glorious light to shine on Zion: this is followed by a glowing description of the blessedness which will result from the conversion of the Hebrews, and the introduction of the Gentiles into the church of Christ. The terms of this prophecy are so very full, that, whatever reference it may have to apostolic or other times, it seems to be certain that its complete and final accomplishment can take place only when the fulness of Christ's millennial glory shall fill the world. (Chap. lx.—lxvi.)

A large space has been devoted to this prophecy. Its extent, vast importance, and evangelical character have made this necessary; and I would fain hope that those who have not access to other books will, by the help of the foregoing remarks and analysis, read this grand portion of holy scripture more intelligently and usefully than heretofore.

The BOOK OF JEREMIAH next in order claims attention. This prophet was a Hebrew priest of Anathoth, a sacerdotal city, about three miles north of Jerusalem. (Joshua xxi. 18.) He was early called to the prophetic office, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, and continued, with great fidelity and zeal, to discharge the duties of his sacred vocation for about forty-two years. None of the prophets was more violently opposed and persecuted than Jeremiah. An ancient tradition states that he was slain in Egypt by his apostate countrymen; but others say that he lived to return to Judea. There can be no doubt that the ministrations of Jeremiah greatly promoted the religious reformation which took place in the reign of Josiah; for the prophet, harassed by the opposition of his townsmen, repaired to Jerusalem, where he continued his ministry during the remainder of the pious king's reign. The event, however, showed that this reformation was little more than an enforced restoration of the worship of Jehovah by the command of the king. For no sooner was his authority removed, than idolatry again became rampant, and the prophet of God was per-



secuted. We do not, indeed, hear any thing of him during the brief reign of Jehoahaz, which lasted but three months; but in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the prophet was assailed and his ministry interrupted by the priests, the prophets, and the people, who brought him before the authorities, insisting that he should be put to death. The personal influence of his friend Ahikim saved him on that occasion. He was afterwards frequently placed in great personal danger, in consequence of threatenings which he was commanded to communicate to the princes and the people. At length, either in the latter part of this reign or in the beginning of Zedekiah's, the prophet was shut up in confinement by Pashur, "the chief governor of the house of the Lord." He was afterwards liberated; but when the city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, he was again in prison. Jeremiah attached himself to Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon made governor of Judea; and, after the assassination of this chief, was carried by the remnant of rebellious Jews into Egypt. His history afterwards is very uncertain.

From a careful consideration of these prophecies it seems certain that four distinct collections of them were made during the life of the prophet, or immediately after his death.

The first collection was made by Divine command, (chap. xxxvi. 2,) and contained all the predictions which he had delivered up to that time. This comprises chapters i.—xx., xxv., xxvi., xxxv., xxxvi., xlv.—li., inclusive. The predictions respecting the Gentile nations are in our Bibles placed at the end of the book; but anciently, and in the Septuagint, they are inserted after chapter xxv. 13.

The second collection is mentioned chapter xxx. 2, and comprised chapters xxvii.—xxxi. It was made in the reign of Zedekiah.

The third collection was made soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, and included chapters xxi.—xxiv., xxxii.—xxxiv., and xxxvii.—xxxix.

The fourth collection, containing chapters xl.—xlv., gives an account of Jeremiah himself, and of the other Jews who were left in Judea by Nebuchadnezzar.

It follows from this, that the productions of this prophet in our Bibles are not arranged in chronological order. This has led several scholars to attempt a natural arrangement of the several predictions. Of these I prefer giving the substance of that suggested by Dr. Blayney, which seems, on the whole, the most satisfactory. This divides the contents of the book into four sections, which we give in order.

The first part comprises the prophecies which were delivered in the reign of Josiah. This was given in four separate discourses. (Chap. i.—xiii.)

1. The first discourse appears to have been delivered soon after Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office. It records the vocation of the prophet; then states the Lord's intense love for the Hebrew people; expostulates with them on account of their ungrateful rebellion, notwithstanding his great goodness towards them; shows the misery to which this conduct would expose them; and concludes with a pathetic exhortation to repentance. (Chap. i.—iii. 5.)

2. The second discourse is in two parts. The first contains a complaint against Judah for having gone even beyond Israel in iniquity. The prophet then announces a promise of mercy to Israel on her repentance. (Chap. iii. 6—iv. 2.) The second part opens with an address to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, exhorting them to avert the judgments of God by a timely repentance. The Babylonish invasion, with all its horrors, is then described; and the general and incorrigible sins of the people are shown to be the great cause of national ruin. (Chap. iv. 3—vi.)

3. In the third discourse, which was delivered at the gate of the temple, the prophet openly rebuked the misleading communications of the false prophets, who laboured to persuade them that the Lord would never allow Jerusalem to be destroyed; showing, by the example of Shiloh, that this would be the case, and justifying this severity by the unexampled impiety and idolatry of the people, and declaring that even their sacrifices were unacceptable to God whilst his commands were disobeyed; adding the most severe denunciations of their gross idolatries. (Chap. vii.—viii. 3.) In the second part the prophet, in the name of the Lord, reproves those Jews, who thought the Lord would preserve them because they had his law, although they disobeyed it. (Chap. viii. 4—17.) The prophet then laments the impending ruin of his country; (chap. viii. 18—ix. ;) and earnestly persuades the people to abandon their idolatries, showing the vanity of idols in comparison of the true God. (Chap. x. 1—18.) Jerusalem is then introduced as lamenting her ruin, and supplicating mercy. (Verses 19—25.)

4. In the fourth discourse the prophet endeavours to bring the people back to their allegiance to God, by proclaiming anew the terms of the covenant, which they had entered into with God in the eighteenth year of Josiah, as recorded 2 Kings xxii. 3; xxiii. 3. (Chap. xi. 1—8.) He then denounces severe

judgments against Judah and Jerusalem. (Verses 9—17.) Other prophecies follow ; then the restoration of the Hebrews and the ruin of their enemies are announced. (Chap. xi., xii.)

The second part contains the prophecies delivered during the reign of Jehoiakim, which consist of thirteen discourses.

1. The first is a single and distinct prophecy, which, under two symbols,—a linen girdle left to rot, and the breaking of bottles filled with wind,—exhibits the entire destruction of the Hebrew nation. (Chap. xiii. 1—14.) Then follows an exhortation to repentance, (verses 15—21,) and the manifestation of their wickedness as the cause of their impending ruin. (Verses 22—27.)

2. The second discourse predicts a severe famine, which failed to induce repentance. (Chap. xiv. 1—22.) The prophet then declares the purpose of God to destroy Judah, unless they should speedily repent. (Chap. xv. 1—9.) Complaining to God that he is, on account of his prophecies, become an object of hatred, the prophet receives an assurance of protection. (Verses 10—21.)

3. The third discourse foretells the utter ruin of the Hebrew people, by the type of the prophet being forbidden to marry and to feast. (Chap. xvi. 1—13.) He then announces their future restoration, as well as the conversion of the Gentiles ; (verses 14—21 ;) with a reproof of their inveterate idolatry and reliance on human help. (Chap. xvii. 1—18.)

4. The fourth of these discourses is a complete prophecy respecting the observance of the sabbath. (Verses 19—27.)

5. The fifth describes God's power to dispose of nations, like that of the potter over the vessels which he forms ; and the judgments threatened against Judah : the prophet cries to the Lord against his enemies. (Chap. xviii.)

6. The sixth shows, under the type of breaking a potter's vessel, the ruin of Judah and Jerusalem ; and Pashur is threatened for his conduct toward the prophet. (Chap. xix.—xxi.)

7. The seventh discourse opens with a spirited address to the king, his servants, and his people, enjoining an adherence to justice and righteousness as the only means of preventing national ruin. (Chap. xxii. 1—9.) The captivity of Shallum is then declared to be irreversible ; (verses 10—12 ;) the king is severely threatened and his end foretold ; (verses 13—19 ;) similar evils are denounced against his family. (Verses 20—30.) This address then concludes with promises of future blessings. (Chap. xxiii. 1—8.)

8. The eighth discourse denounces severe judgment against false prophets. (Chap. xxiii. 9—40.)



9. The ninth discourse predicts the subjugation of Judah and the neighbouring countries to the king of Babylon for seventy years; (chap. xxv. 1—11;) after which Babylon is doomed to destruction. (Verses 12—14.) The fearful ruin of many existing nations is then figuratively set forth. (Verses 15—38.)

10. The tenth discourse opens with a prediction of the certain destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, without instant repentance and reformation. (Chap. xxvi. 1—6.) On account of this, the prophet is arrested, and accused of a capital offence: his friends, however, having pleaded the case of Micah, he is acquitted; (verses 7—19;) on which the prophet observes that there had been a precedent for inflicting capital punishment in such a case in the present reign. (Verses 20—24.)

11. The eleventh discourse shows the condemnation of the Jews, from the conduct of the Rechabites. (Chap. xxxv.)

12. The twelfth relates that the prophet, by Divine command, causes Baruch to write all his former prophecies in a roll, and to read them to the people on a fast-day. (Chap. xxxvi. 1—10.) Upon this the princes cause Baruch to read the contents of the roll to them. (Verses 11—15.) Astonished at these communications, they request the prophet and Baruch to conceal themselves: (verses 16—19;) they then inform the king of the contents of this writing, who destroys the roll. (Verses 20—26.) The prophet is then directed to write it anew, and to add further denunciations of judgment against the king. (Verses 27—31.) This is done by Baruch, who is greatly alarmed, but is prophetically assured of Divine protection. (Chap. xlv.)

13. The thirteenth discourse contains a series of predictions respecting several Gentile nations, which are supposed to have been delivered at this time, and to have been removed to the end of the book, as being unconnected with those which related to the Hebrew people. They announce the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish; (chap. xlv. 2—12;) the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar; (verses 13—28;) the subjugation of Philistia and Tyre, (chap. xlvii.,) and of the Moabites. (Chap. xlviii.) Then follows the declaration of a similar fate for the Ammonites, (chap. xlix. 1—6,) Edom, (verses 7—22,) Damascus, (verses 23—27,) and of Kedar. (Verses 28—33.)

The third part of this book consists of prophecies delivered by Jeremiah in the reign of Zedekiah, and extends to twelve discourses.

1. The first of these is a brief prediction of the conquest of Persia, and its restoration. (Chap. xlix. 34—39.)

2. The second shows, by the type of good and bad figs, the

different fate of the Hebrews who had been previously carried into captivity, from that which was reserved for Zedekiah and the people of his day. (Chap. xxiv.)

3. In the third discourse the Jews of Babylon are warned not to believe those who pretended to foretell their speedy return to their own land; and judgment is denounced against Shemaiah for writing to Babylon against Jeremiah. (Chap. xxix.)

4. The fourth discourse predicts the restoration of the Jews, and the blessings with which they should be favoured. (Chap. xxx., xxxi.)

5. In the fifth the prophet relates that Zedekiah, in his fourth year, being solicited by ambassadors from the kings of Edom, Moab, and other neighbouring nations, to form a confederacy against Babylon, Jeremiah is commanded, under the type of bonds and yokes, to urge them all quietly to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, and not to give credence to false prophets. (Chap. xxvii., xxviii.)

6. The sixth discourse contains a brilliant prophecy of the ruin of Babylon, interspersed with predictions of the restoration of the Hebrews. (Chap. i., li. 1—58.)

7. The seventh discourse is the result of a request from his countrymen to the prophet, that he would inquire of the Lord for them. In it he predicts a severe siege, to be followed by a miserable captivity: he then advises the people to submit to the Chaldeans, and counsels the court to avert the Divine anger by doing justice and trusting in God, rather than in their fortifications, which he assures them could not save, if God decreed their ruin. (Chap. xxi.)

8. The eighth discourse contains two distinct prophecies. The first announces to Zedekiah the capture and burning of Jerusalem, his own captivity, peaceful death, and honourable burial. The second severely reproves and threatens the Jews for the violation of the covenant into which they had entered with God, on the temporary withdrawal of the invading army. (Chap. xxxiv.)

9. The ninth discourse predicts the retreat of the Egyptian army, and the return of Nebuchadnezzar to the siege of Jerusalem. For the publication of this, the prophet was cast into a dungeon, from which he was soon after taken, but still kept in confinement. (Chap. xxxvii. 6—21.)

10. The tenth discourse confirms the promised return of the Jews, by Jeremiah being commanded to purchase a field. (Chap. xxxii.)

11. The eleventh discourse predicts the restoration of Israel

and Judah, and the temporal and spiritual blessings by which it should be followed. (Chap. xxxiii.)

12. The twelfth discourse relates the last events which occurred in the course of national ruin. (Chap. xxxviii., xxxix.)

The fourth part furnishes an historical relation of the events which took place from the capture of Jerusalem to the retreat of the fugitive Jews into Egypt, with the predictions delivered in that country by Jeremiah. This narration is divided into two parts, or discourses.

1. The first contains the events which occurred from the ruin of the city, to the time when, in defiance of the warnings of the prophet, the remnant of the Jews determined to go into Egypt. (Chap. xli., xlii.)

2. The second contains the account of the going into Egypt, and the prophecies which Jeremiah delivered there. (Chap. xliii., xliv.)

An attention to this analysis will cast important light on the scope and design of the several important predictions of this book, and guide the student to a just apprehension of their proper meaning.

The LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH follow the book of his prophecy. It consists of five several poems, or elegies, which are very properly, in our version, distributed into five chapters. Each of these is divided into twenty-two periods, corresponding to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and in the first four elegies, each period begins with a different letter in alphabetic order, after the manner of an acrostic. The title and subject matter of this portion of scripture so clearly define the application of its several parts, that any further exposition or analysis is rendered unnecessary.

The BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL will next in order occupy our attention. Of the personal history of this inspired man we know but little, yet what we do know is highly important. He was the son of a priest, and, consequently, a descendant of Aaron. He was carried away captive to Babylon when Jehoiachin was deposed and led away by the conqueror. Ezekiel was located with a colony of Hebrew captives on the banks of the Chebar, a navigable river of Mesopotamia, which falls into the Euphrates. We have no information of his having exercised the prophetic office before he was taken from his own country, nor, as Calmet teaches, until the fifth year of his captivity. Differing greatly in style and manner from both Isaiah and



Jeremiah, Ezekiel must be regarded as one of the most eminent of the sacred seers, both in respect of the grandeur and extent of his revelations, and the manner in which they are written. Equal to any of the sacred writers in sublimity, of a deep, vehement, tragical, and peculiar kind, he paints, rather than speaks of, the matters of his discourse.

The special vocation of Ezekiel, as that of his contemporary Daniel, was clearly to sustain, by inspired communications, the cause of revealed truth, and the great purpose of God in human redemption, after the apostasy of the elect people had done all that was possible to destroy them. We shall notice the manner and extent to which this was done in the following brief analysis of the book. It has been divided into nine parts or sections, containing forty-eight chapters.

The first part contains the call of Ezekiel to the prophetic office. (Chap. i.—iii. 15.)

This is done by a manifestation of God to the prophet, of peculiar glory and significance. Our limits forbid any refutation of the numerous fanciful interpretations which have been put on this scene, such as its being an allegorical or emblematical representation of God's providential government, because the "wheels were full of eyes." We observe at once that at this time the sacred sanctuary, which had so long been the seat of the Divine glory, was beleagured by a Heathen host, which was shortly destined to burn it with fire and raze it to the ground. All the most sacred types of the work of redemption—the ark, the cherubim, the propitiatory, as well as the presence of the living word, the glorious Shekinah of God—were soon to be removed from the place which they had so long occupied in the church of the Lord. In such circumstances, how does Jehovah manifest himself to his servant? By a glorious revelation of the living antitype of all these typical things. As Isaiah, when he was called to the highest elevation of the prophetic office, saw the typical furniture of the inner sanctuary instinct with life, exhibiting in all its splendour the glory of Christ; so Ezekiel has a similar vision in the wilderness, with this more immediate and direct reference to the incarnation,—namely, that on the throne "was the likeness as the appearance of a man." (Chap. i. 26.) If any thing beyond the exact similarity of appearance and of name is necessary to identify these visionary representations with the types of the inner sanctuary, we have it in the fact, that when, afterward, these same living cherubim appeared in a similar way to the prophet in the court of the temple, he saw the Shekinah leave

the typical propitiatory, come out on the threshold of the temple, and then take its seat over the wings of the living cherubim. (Chap. x. 4, 18.) It is easy to perceive here, as in the case of Isaiah, the effect which this exhibition of the Son of God, carrying out his work of redemption, would produce on the mind of the prophet. He would see, that, although surrounded with every external discouragement, there were nevertheless glorious proofs that the purpose of God in the economy of grace should succeed and ultimately prevail. From this throne above the cherubim, the Lord spoke to Ezekiel, and assigned him his work as a prophet of the Lord.

Although the importance of these prophetic revelations can scarcely be over-estimated, our further analysis of their contents must be brief.

The second part, extending from chapter iii. 16 to the end of chapter vii., presents the first general carrying out of the prophet's vocation. He here delivers a most circumstantial prediction of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, with all its horrors. In this section, we find most remarkable typical representations, which could not fail to make a deep impression on the captive Hebrews, when accompanied by the nervous and impassioned explanations of the prophet. This part closes with a promise that a remnant shall be saved.

The third part embraces chapters viii.—xi. Ezekiel places the rejection of the people of the covenant, on the ground of a definite historical event,—the desecration of God's temple by idolatrous superstitions. In showing this, the prophet is carried to Jerusalem, placed in the recesses of the temple, sees there chambers covered with the symbols of the idolatries of every surrounding nation, and devoted to the most infamous rites; vengeance is then denounced against the wicked, whilst those who lament these prevalent abominations are marked for deliverance. The abandonment of the city by Jehovah is signified by the departure of the Shekinah; and the prophet returns to communicate his revelations to the companions of his captivity.

The fourth part extends from chapter xii. to xix. Here the prophet proceeds, in full detail, to exhibit and to denounce the more prominent vices, abominations, and sins which disgraced the Hebrews of that time, and brought down the judgments of God on that land. Nothing can exceed the unsparing fidelity and vigour of expression which marks every portion of this address.

The fifth part begins with chapter xx., and extends to chap-

ter xxiii. As the period of judgment drew near, the whole soul of the prophet seems to have been concentrated on the impending ruin; and, absorbing all his genius, it becomes the grand subject of prophetic announcement. The manner in which the subject is treated in this section is truly wonderful. Imbued with the prescient Spirit of God, he stands forth in defence of the insulted majesty of Divine law as the judge of his people, and, speaking under the delegated authority of Jehovah, reproves the practice of prevailing iniquity more in the character of a messenger from heaven, than as one of the family of men.

The sixth part concludes this series of prophecies. (Chap. xxiv.) It sets forth the impressive manner in which the prophet, on the very day that Nebuchadnezzar begun the siege of Jerusalem, announced the fact to the Hebrews on the banks of the Chebar, and by the most significant actions showed the full and fatal ruin which would fall on that guilty city.

The seventh part contains a group of predictions directed against neighbouring nations,—Ammon, Moab, Edom, Tyre, Sidon, Assyria, and Egypt. All these are successively threatened with fearful judgments, and generally with national ruin. (Chap. xxv.—xxxii.)

The eighth part contains a separate group of prophecies, delivered after the fall of Jerusalem, and referring to the future condition of the Hebrew people. It opens with a solemn warning to those who as watchmen are charged with a message from God to mankind, and forcibly points out their fearful responsibility. Afterwards, whilst faithfully reproving the unfaithful governors of Israel, he announces the restoration of the people; and, after threatening Edom, promises general prosperity and blessing under the reign of Messiah. Then follow the remarkable and hitherto unexplained predictions respecting Gog and Magog. (Chap. xxxiii.—xxxix.)

The ninth part contains predictions which apparently refer to the final conversion and recovery of the Hebrews, and the millennial glory of Christ in his universal reign on earth.

The BOOK OF DANIEL follows that of Ezekiel in the sacred canon. This prophet, if not of the blood royal of the house of David, as the Jews maintain, was of noble descent; and a more truly noble character is not to be found in the wide circle of humanity. Although the prophecies contained in this book are inferior to none for the great importance of the events predicted, the range of time which their fulfilment occu-



pied, or the minute detail in which they are given; yet the Jews do not reckon this book among the writings of the prophets in their arrangement of the Hebrew scriptures, but give it a place in the *Hagiographa*, after the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, &c. It has been assigned, as a reason for this, that Daniel lived as a courtier employed in the service of the state, and therefore, although inspired so as to be able to deliver revelations of the Divine will as a sacred seer, he was not entitled to rank as a prophet, seeing that the duties of that office required the entire consecration of a man's whole time and life. So that, as far as I understand the view of the learned on this point, Daniel is supposed to hold just the same relation to a prophet, that a local preacher does to a minister. Whatever force there may be in this, I do not think it furnishes a solution of the difficulty. I believe the point and force with which the predictions of Daniel were quoted in proof of the Messiahship of Christ, led the Jews of that day to do all in their power to lower his authority as a prophet. The position which the book holds in the Septuagint, and the manner in which it is spoken of by Josephus, is a sufficient warrant for this opinion.

This book consists of two parts, and is divided into twelve chapters.

The first part is purely historical, (chap. i.—vi.,) and is written with such plainness and perspicuity that—with the single observation that the second year of Nebuchadnezzar (ii. 1) does not mean the second of his reign, but the second after he had completed his conquests, and that therefore a considerable time elapsed between the events spoken of in the first chapter and those narrated in the second—it requires no further assistance in the way of arrangement. It is, however, necessary to call attention to the remarkable predictions which are interspersed in this narrative. Some of them—as, for instance, that respecting the five monarchies represented by the great image, and the stone cut out of the mountain without hands—extend in their accomplishment throughout all time. Others, as that predicting the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar and the prophecy of Belshazzar's death, were fulfilled soon after they were delivered. No predictions can more clearly or fully exhibit the perfection of the Divine prescience and government than do these.

The second part contains a series of predictions, remarkable for their extent and particularity. (Chap. vii.—xii.) These may be divided into four sections.

1. The vision of the four beasts is a counterpart of the prophecy respecting the four monarchies; which most clearly refer to the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires. (Chap. vii.)

2. The vision of the ram and he-goat is a remarkable prophecy of the conquest of Persia by Alexander, and the fate of that empire which the conqueror raised. (Chap. viii.)

3. This section informs us that Daniel, having studied the prophecies of Jeremiah, felt intensely anxious to know when the period of the captivity, spoken of by him as seventy years, would terminate; and sought the Lord by fasting and prayer for this purpose. After these devout exercises, his wishes were met, the Lord revealing to him the period when Messiah should appear, and the glorious results which would be accomplished by his mission. (Chap. ix.)

4. This section contains further predictions respecting the empires of Persia, Greece, and Rome, and the consummation of the Divine purpose in the kingdom of Messiah.

The BOOK OF HOSEA comes next. We know nothing respecting the personal history of this prophet: he ministered contemporaneously with Isaiah. An eminent critic speaks thus of Hosea:—"He seems, indeed, of all the prophets, if I may so express myself, to be most of a Jew. Comparatively, he seems to care little about other people. He wanders not, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, into the collateral history of the surrounding nations. He meddles not, like Daniel, with the great empires of the world. His own country seems to engross his whole attention,—her privileges, her crimes, her punishments, her pardon. He predicts, indeed, in the strongest and clearest terms, the engrafting of the Gentiles into the church of God; but he mentions it only generally." \*

The scope of this prophet's predictions is to exhibit, reprove, and convince the Hebrews generally, and the Israelites in particular, of their numerous sins, especially their idolatry; to denounce their imminent and final captivity if they persisted in their sins, notwithstanding their trust in Egypt; and to invite them to repentance, with promises of mercy, and declarations of gospel blessings.

This prophecy contains fourteen chapters, which may be divided into five sections, or discourses.

1. By the emblem of the supposed infidelity of the prophet's wife, the idolatry of the Israelites is prominently set forth.

\* BISHOP HORSLEY'S "Biblical Criticism," vol. iii. p. 238.

This is followed by strong statements of the punishment which such bad conduct merits, and promises of grace on repentance. (Chap. i.—iii.)

2. The vices, bloodshed, and idolatry of the people are here exhibited, and condemned in direct terms. The people of Judah are called to take warning from the fate of Israel. (Chap. iv., v.)

3. The preceding invitations to repentance having proved ineffectual, the prophet bitterly complains of their obstinate iniquity, and denounces the utter ruin of Israel, notwithstanding her trust in Egypt. (Chap. vi.—viii.)

4. The captivity and dispersion of Israel are further threatened; their idolatry severely condemned; yet they are not to be utterly cast off: their restoration is promised, in connexion with severe denunciations of their idolatry. (Chap. ix.—xiii. 1—8.)

5. Further exhibitions and illustrations of the fearful evil of idolatry, and of the punishment by which it is to be visited, are followed by earnest exhortations to repentance; after which a beautiful prayer is suggested, as adapted to their case, concluding with a prediction of the restoration of all the tribes, and their conversion to the gospel. (Chap. xiii. 9—xiv.)

**THE BOOK OF JOEL.**—Although nothing is certainly known respecting the residence of this prophet, or the time when he ministered, yet since he makes no mention of the Assyrians or Babylonians as enemies of the Hebrews, but only of Egypt and Edom; and, further, because, like Amos, he only denounces judgments against the Tyrians, Sidonians, and Idumeans; it is reasonably concluded that he prophesied during the reign of Uzziah.

This book consists of three discourses, or parts, and is in our version divided into three chapters.

The first part contains an exhortation to repentance, on the grounds of the famine occasioned by the ravages of the palmer-worm, &c., in consequence of their sins; and is followed by a denunciation of greater inflictions, in case they remained impenitent. (Chap. i.—ii. 11.)

The second part is an exhortation to keep a general and solemn fast, with special humiliation before God. This is followed by a promise that existing calamities will be removed on the repentance of the people. The terms of this promise, although applicable to the time of the prophet, had a deeper meaning, and fully indicated the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in gospel times. (Acts ii. 17—21.)



The third part predicts the general conversion and restoration of the Jews, and the destruction of their enemies; with the glorious religious prosperity which will follow these events.

**THE BOOK OF AMOS.**—This prophet was not trained in the usual way in the schools of the prophets, but taken from rural employments to the duties of the sacred office. He prophesied during the time that Uzziah reigned in Judah, and Jeroboam II. in Israel. His predictions, although occasionally applicable to Judah, were generally directed against Israel. The principal occasion for his great severity of language arose out of the circumstances of his country at the time. At this period, Israel, which had been “cut short by Hazael,” was restored to her former splendour by the prowess of Jeroboam II.; and in consequence of this prosperity the people, who had been humbled and led to seek the Lord, now threw off his fear, and plunged into wickedness and idolatry. To check the progress of these evils, Amos was called to declare to them the will of the Lord. His predictions, which extend in our version to nine chapters, may be divided into three parts.

The first part is introductory, and may be regarded as a prelude to the main subject of the book. In it the countries bordering on Palestine are arraigned, convicted, and threatened. (Chap. i.—ii. 5.)

The second part contains a fearful denunciation of Divine judgments against Judah and Israel. This seems to comprise four discourses.

1. A general statement of the aggravated character and number of the sins of the people of Judah against God; and the consequent danger to which they are exposed. (Chap. ii. 6—16.)

2. A denunciation of Divine wrath against Israel. (Chap. iii.)

3. A strong and earnest denunciation against Israel for their oppression and idolatry. (Chap. iv.)

4. A lamentation over Israel on account of their sin, followed by an explicit declaration of their impending ruin by the Assyrians, the certainty of which is confirmed by several prophetic visions. (Chap. v.—ix. 1—10.)

The third part is a short but exceedingly interesting prophecy of the introduction of the gospel, and the progress of its blessings, under the figure of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David. (Chap. ix. 13—15.)

**THE BOOK OF OBADIAH.**—We have no certain information

when this prophet wrote. His short but very beautiful prophecy denounces the ruin of Edom for their sin, (verses 1—9,) and especially for their cruel enmity to the Jews in their deep distress; (verses 10—16;) and then predicts the restoration of the Jews, their triumph over their enemies, and their future prosperity.

**THE BOOK OF JONAH.**—This is the only one of the Hebrew prophets who was called of set purpose to minister to a Gentile people. His mission to Nineveh is exceedingly interesting and important, as a manifestation of the grace of God to the Gentiles in Old-Testament times. This inspired man, who was a native of the district afterwards called Galilee, prophesied to the kingdom of Israel in the reign of Jeroboam II.; but the Israelites continuing impenitent, the Lord sent him to Nineveh to deliver his word in the Assyrian capital. As his own countrymen refused to repent, he durst not go to the Heathen, and so took ship to flee from the presence of the Lord. Being cast into the sea and miraculously preserved, he would no longer disobey, but proceeded to fulfil his mission. The book before us details his conduct and its results. It may be divided into two parts.

In the first part we have his mission to Nineveh, his attempt to flee to Tarshish, its frustration, and his deliverance from the fish which had swallowed him. (Chap. i., ii.)

The second part details his second mission, his preaching to the Ninevites, their humiliation and repentance, (and we have scarcely in the whole range of scripture a more effective description of true penitence,) the discontent of Jonah when the city was spared, and the touching tenderness of God's reproof. (Chap. iii., iv.)

**THE BOOK OF MICAH.**—This prophet was contemporary with Isaiah, and his words are quoted by Jeremiah. The book contains seven chapters, and may be divided into three parts.

The first part consists of prophecies delivered in the reigns of Pekah king of Israel, and Jotham king of Judah, in which Divine judgments are denounced against both nations for their sins. (Chap. i.)

The second part contains predictions delivered in the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah, in which the ruin and captivity of both nations are threatened; after which the glorious and peaceful kingdom of Messiah is announced. (Chap. ii.—iv. 8.)

The third part contains prophecies delivered in the reign of

Hezekiah. These begin with a remarkable prediction of the ruin of Zion by Babylon, which at that time was scarcely known among the nations; and proceeds to that beautiful and explicit prediction of the birth-place of Messiah which was quoted by the scribes to Herod. (Matt. ii. 6.)

**THE BOOK OF NAHUM.**—The scope of this prophecy is to declare the certain and imminent ruin of the Assyrian empire, and of Nineveh its capital city; which, although it repented at the preaching of Jonah, had relapsed into its former wickedness and idolatry.

The whole book is one entire poem of great beauty, boldness, and sublimity. It opens with a fine description of the power and justice of God, operating in union with his goodness and mercy. Nahum predicts the destruction of the army of Sennacherib, and the deliverance of Hezekiah. He then describes the ruin of Nineveh with great vigour and minuteness, and the utter subversion of the empire.

**THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK** consists of two parts.

The first is written in a kind of dialogue between the prophet and the Lord. It opens with the prophet's complaint of abounding wickedness; (chap. i. 4;) in reply to which, the Lord declares their approaching ruin by the Chaldeans. (Verses 5—11.) The prophet then humbly complains that the Lord should employ such wicked agents to execute his wrath. (Verses 12—17; ii. 1.) To this the Lord responds, announcing the future ruin of Babylon, and the ultimate deliverance and blessing of his people. (Chap. ii. 2—20.)

The second part is a beautiful supplicatory psalm, in which the prophet prays that the Lord may revive his work, and hasten the deliverance of his people. (Chap. iii.)

**THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH.**—This prophet ministered in the early part of the reign of Josiah. The prophecy consists of three chapters. In chapter i., the sins of the Hebrews are severely reprimanded, and a day of fearful retribution is threatened. Chapter ii. opens with an invitation to repentance, and a promise of mercy, apparently as a sequel to the preceding chapter. The prophet then takes a wider compass, and condemns the ungodly, idolatrous, and persecuting states bordering on Judea, against whom he denounces terrible punishment. Chapter iii. contains a prediction of the Babylonish captivity, and the subsequent restoration of the Hebrews.



**THE BOOK OF HAGGAI.**—This prophet is the first of a new series of these sacred seers. He is supposed to have been born at Babylon, and to have come to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. The Jews, having been greatly harassed by their powerful neighbours, had ceased building the temple for fourteen years, when their spirits were revived by the decree of Darius in their favour. At this time the Lord raised up Haggai to give effect to this providential opening. His prophecy is accordingly directed to this object. It contains three discourses:—

1. The prophet reproves the delay of the people in the rebuilding of the temple, which is assigned as the reason of unproductive seasons. He then urges them to a diligent prosecution of the work. (Chap. i.)

2. The prophet gives the further encouragement to the builders, that, notwithstanding the inferiority of their means, the glory of this latter house should exceed that of the former temple, and that the ensuing harvest should be abundant. (Chap. ii. 1—19.)

3. He then exhibits the establishment of Messiah's kingdom under the name of Zerubbabel. (Verses 20—23.)

**THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH.**—This prophet began his ministry in the second year of Darius, just at the time of, or soon after, the prophet Haggai; the primary object of his addresses being the same; namely, the speedy completion of the new temple. This book, which is the longest of the minor prophets, consists of two parts.

The first part contains the prophecies delivered in the second year of Darius, king of Persia, which were mainly directed to promote the erection of the temple. This comprises five discourses.

1. The first exhorts the Jews who had returned from captivity to guard against the sins which had brought such fearful calamities on their fathers, and to go on with the erection of the house of the Lord. To encourage them in this work, he predicts the prosperity of Jerusalem, and urges the Jews at Babylon to leave that city, in order to save themselves from being involved in its ruin. (Chap. i., ii.)

2. The second discourse sets forth the glory of Christ as the chief corner-stone of his church under the type of Joshua clothed in his priestly garments. (Chap. iii.)

3. The third discourse represents the success of Zerubbabel in building the temple and restoring to the people the sacred services of religion, by the vision of the two olive-trees and the golden candlestick. (Chap. iv.)

4. In the fourth discourse, by a vision of a flying roll, Divine judgments are denounced against theft and perjury; and the Jews are threatened with a second captivity, if they continue in sin. (Chap. v.)

5. The fifth discourse, by the vision of four chariots, sets forth the four great monarchies, and, by two crowns of gold on the head of Joshua, the re-establishment of the civil and religious polity of the Hebrews. (Chap. vi.)

The second part contains the prophecies delivered during the fourth year of Darius, (chap. vii.—xiv.) and is divided into four discourses.

1. The first relates the arrival in Jerusalem of messengers from Babylon, to inquire whether the Jews in the East were still to keep the fasts which had been instituted on account of the captivity; upon which the prophet is commissioned to enforce the observance of judgment and mercy as the substance of the law, lest other calamities, equally fearful, should come upon them. On their obedience, the Lord promises the continuance of his favour, and releases them from the observance of the fasts referred to. They are then encouraged to prosecute the building with all diligence. (Chap. vii., viii.)

2. The second discourse contains predictions of Alexander's conquests, and the special care of the Lord over his temple in those perilous times. The advent of Messiah is incidentally announced, and further victories and successes promised to the Jews. (Chap. ix., x.)

3. The third discourse predicts the rejection of Israel in consequence of their rejection of Christ, and the valuing of him at thirty pieces of silver. (Chap. xi.)

4. The fourth discourse announces a series of prophecies which seem to refer to the latter period of gospel times, and are consequently not now understood. (Chap. xii.—xiv.)

**THE BOOK OF MALACHI.**—So little is known of the person of this prophet, that it has been doubted whether this appellation is a proper name or a term of office, as the word signifies "my angel." We incline, however, to the opinion, that it is properly the name of the last of the prophets.

Malachi is generally understood to have fulfilled his vocation about 416 B.C. His work contains four chapters, and is composed of two discourses.

The first opens with a reply to the complaint of the Jews, that God had showed them no special favour, by a citation of several instances of particular providential blessing. The pro-

phet then reproves them for their sinful neglect of duty and want of reverence for God; for which their rejection is threatened, and the calling of the Gentiles promised. Both priests and people are further convicted of sin, and, in consequence, threatened with punishment. (Chap. i., ii.)

The second discourse foretells the ministration of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ, under the name of Elias, and of Christ himself. Reproofs and threatenings accompany this promise, and the prophecy closes with an earnest injunction to obey the law, on pain of the most fearful judgments. (Chap. iii., iv.)

This closes the Old-Testament canon. Necessarily brief as our sketch of these records of Divine revelation has been, it will, we hope, be found sufficient to explain the proper time and subject of each of the books, and to indicate the scope and contents of every section and almost of every chapter in the Old Testament. To those possessing a considerable number of books, such a summary may not be without its use; while to those who are almost shut up to their Bible and Hymn-Book, this information will afford very important and essential light.



## LECTURE V.

### THE NEW-TESTAMENT BOOKS.

**PREPARATORY** Character of the Old Testament—The New-Testament Scriptures given in Greek—Different Divisions of the New Testament—Apostolic Sense of the Term “Gospel”—**THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW**—The Language in which it was written—Canonical Authority of this Book—Its Contents—Peculiarities of this Gospel—**THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK**—Its Author—For whom written—Its Contents—**THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE**—The Author of this Book—Probably a Gentile Freedman—Special Importance of numerous Statements in this Book—Its Contents—Proofs of the Writer’s Erudition—**THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN**—Circumstances and personal History of the Author—His Object in writing this Book—Alleged Disagreement between John and the preceding Evangelists—Peculiarities of this Gospel—Analysis of its Contents—**THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**—Its Author, and his Object—The Contents of the Book—Advice respecting the historical Books—The doctrinal or epistolary Portion of New-Testament Scripture—Its general Character—**THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS**—Written by Paul—Had Peter been at Rome?—The Author’s Design—Analysis of the Book—**THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS**—The Parties to whom it was addressed, and the Object of the Apostle—Contents of the Epistle—**THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS**—Its Design and Contents—Proofs hereby afforded of the Apostle’s Spirit and Power—**THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS**—The Origin and State of this Church—Contents of the Letter—Peculiarity of the Argument—**THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS**—The State of the Church—The Contents of the Epistle—**THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS**—Its Object and Contents—Origin and State of the Church—**THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS**—Great Resemblance between it and that to the Ephesians—Object and Contents of the Epistle—**THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS**—State of the Church—Contents of the Epistle—**THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS**—Its Objects and Contents—**THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY**—Its Occasion and Contents—**THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY**—Its Object and Contents—**THE EPISTLE TO TITUS**—The Reason for writing it—An Analysis of the Letter—**THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON**—Its Object, Sentiments, and Beauty—**THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS**—The Author—Object and Contents of this Book—Its great Importance—**THE GENERAL EPISTLES**—That of **JAMES**—Its singular Character—Contents—**FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER**—Design and Analysis of the Letter—**SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER**—Its Contents—**FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN**—Its peculiar Manner—Important Contents—**SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN**—**THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN**—**EPISTLE OF JUDE**—Its Contents—**THE PROPHETICAL PORTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**—**THE BOOK OF REVELATION**—Its Author—Character—And Contents—Conclusion.

WE now approach a new and most important section of the inspired writings. All that precedes the New Testament,—pure

as it is in principle, grand as it is in the glorious manifestation of the Holy Spirit, in miracle, and in prophecy,—is, nevertheless, evidently preparatory in its character. It is truly surprising, when we carefully look into the facts, to see how fully this applies to all the Old-Testament scriptures. The law, in all its wide range of requirement, is clearly but introductory to another and better covenant, in which typical atonements and purifications give place to a real and efficient sacrifice for sin, and a sanctification of spirit cleansing from all iniquity. The very nature of prophecy makes it preparatory; and, in fact, every element of Old-Testament economy is of a similar character. But in the New-Testament scriptures we have the issue and the end of the great redeeming purpose of God fully developed. We cannot, therefore, feel too deeply impressed with the sanctity and magnitude of the subject, as we enter upon a consideration of the writings of the evangelists and apostles.

It was observed in a preceding discourse, that the Old-Testament scriptures were all written in the Hebrew language. As they were revelations specially made to the elect people of Jehovah, and delivered by inspired men of that nation, this might have been expected. Such was not the case, however, with the writings of the new covenant. These were revelations intended for the world; and it might reasonably be expected that they would be communicated in a language best adapted to serve this purpose.

The wonderful providence of God fully met the existing exigency. It gave to the people of Greece, through two distinct and dissimilar agencies, (namely, the paramount influence of their arts, learning, and literature, and the victorious arms of Alexander,) such an ascendancy over other nations, as was perhaps never possessed before or since by any other country. In consequence of this ascendancy, the scriptures of the Old Testament, which had been rendered into Greek by the Hellenist Jews of Egypt, became known to the learned throughout the principal cities of the Roman empire even before the birth of Christ. We need not wonder, then, that the New-Testament writings, which, being intended for the instruction of the world, were required to have the widest circulation, should have been given to the church in the Greek language. It was so; and it will be my object in this lecture to give, in as condensed a form as possible, a general view of the writers, and of the contents, of the books of the New Testament.

The most ancient arrangement of these books is found in the work of Irenæus, where they are spoken of as the writings of

the evangelists and apostles, the first head comprising the four Gospels ; the second, the remaining books. This arrangement, in substance, was recognised by Clement, Tertullian, and other eminent fathers. Origen divided the New Testament into three parts,—the Gospels, Apostles, and the Apocalypse. The most approved arrangement, however, and that now generally recognised, places the New-Testament scriptures in three sections,—the historical part, containing the Gospels and the Acts ; the doctrinal, comprising the Epistles ; and the prophetical, containing the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation.

Before entering fully into this investigation, there is one other preliminary remark which it may be necessary to make. The term “gospel” was not, in apostolic times, applied to any but oral communications. The first appearance of the term, as applied to the writings of the evangelists, occurs in the works of Justin Martyr, about A.D. 150. From this fact, it may, I think, be safely inferred, that the proper and primary application of the term “gospel,” and the only sense in which it was employed in apostolic times, was to express the good news of grace, when breathed from one converted soul on the ear and heart of his brother man ; to a living ministry, rather than to the subject matter of written records.

The GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW is the first in order of the New-Testament books. The writer of this portion of scripture was the son of Alpheus, a Hebrew, and was called from his office as a receiver of taxes, to be an apostle of Christ. It was the unanimous opinion of antiquity, that this Gospel was composed for the use and instruction of the Hebrew converts ; and it bears abundant internal evidence of the truth of this opinion. Matthew always supposes his readers to be well acquainted with the geography, natural productions, local peculiarities, and general history of the land of Judea. The book is written in such a manner as to take for granted that the reader has the temple and all its sacred services immediately under his eye, and is fully conversant with all Hebrew customs and phraseology, and everything appertaining to the Mosaic law. Matthew, therefore, traces back the genealogy of Jesus Christ to Abraham only : making it his great object to show, that the predictions of the Messiah in the Old Testament were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, who was, indeed, the predicted Son of David, which was to come as the great Redeemer of mankind.

There has been much dispute as to the language in which



this book was written. Different opinions on this subject have been propounded, and argued with more violence than the occasion would seem to justify. It has been urged that it was first written in Hebrew, or rather in the Aramean or Syro-Chaldaic, which was the vernacular language of the Jews at the time of Christ. Others contend that it was originally composed in Greek; whilst others have surmised that Matthew himself put forth two editions, one in Hebrew, and the other in Greek. A full investigation of this subject appears to have removed every doubt, and fully established the fact that Matthew wrote for the use of his Hebrew brethren in their vernacular language, and that his Gospel was afterward translated into Greek; but whether by himself or by some other, has never been satisfactorily settled. It is, however, probable that the translator added sundry interpretations and additions for the information of those who were ignorant of the Hebrew tongue, and the usages of the people; such as, "which being interpreted is, God with us;" (Chap. i. 23;) "that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Chap. xxvii. 46;) "that is to say, a place of a skull;" (verse 33;) &c.: expressions which are evidently used to give the sense of the Hebrew terms to persons not conversant with that language, and which became necessary, when the book was rendered into Greek, and destined to a wider circulation than it was adapted for in its original state.

These circumstances have led to a very careful and, in fact, severe inquiry into the authenticity of this Gospel; which has issued in a very full and complete vindication of its canonical authority. There is, perhaps, no portion of the New Testament which was more early or more generally recognised as inspired scripture than the narrative of Matthew. A chain of unbroken evidence, as clear and decisive as can possibly be adduced or desired, proves this work to have been a divinely-revealed portion of holy writ. In fact, as an eminent scholar has observed, "It appears that the external testimonies clearly prove the genuineness of the Gospel of St. Matthew." The authenticity, indeed, of this Gospel is as well supported as any work of classical antiquity. It can also be shown that it was early in use among Christians, and that the apostolical fathers, at the end of the first century, about seventy years after the resurrection, ascribed to it canonical authority.

In this book are preserved some of the most beautiful and important of our Lord's sayings, which are left without notice or record by all the other evangelists. See chap. xi. 28—30;

xvi. 16—19 ; xvii. 12, 25, 26 ; xxvi. 13. But of the words of Christ for whose preservation we are exclusively indebted to Matthew, the sermon on the mount is the most striking and important example. Luke, indeed, has preserved some beautiful portions of this inimitable address ; but what he has given as isolated sentences, Matthew has presented in harmonious connexion as a methodical and complete discourse.

The contents of Matthew's Gospel have been divided into six sections or parts.

The first part records the genealogy, birth, and infancy of Jesus. These subjects are thus arranged : the genealogy of Christ : (chap. i. 1—17 :) his birth : (verses 18—25 :) the arrival of the magi : their adoration and the slaughter of the infants in and about Bethlehem. (Chap. ii.)

The second part contains an account of the circumstances which took place preparatory to the public ministry of Christ. (Chap. iii.—iv. 11.) We have here a narrative of the preaching of John the Baptist : (chap. iii. 1—12 :) his baptism of Christ : (verses 13—17 :) and the temptation of Christ. (Chap. iv. 1—11.)

The third part records the ministry and miracles of our Lord in Galilee. (Chap. iv. 12—xviii. 35.) Christ goes into Galilee, calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and performs many gracious miraculous cures : (chap. iv. 12—25 :) his sermon on the mount : (chap. v.—vii. :) then follows an account of several other miracles, and of the call of Matthew : (chap. viii., ix. :) Christ's charge to his twelve apostles on sending them forth to preach : (chap. x. :) a narrative of the discourses and actions of Christ, the manner in which they were received, and the effects produced : (chap. xi.—xvi. 12 :) the noble confession of Peter, the transfiguration of Christ, and his discourse to his disciples. (Chap. xvi. 13 ; xviii. 35.)

The fourth part relates his journey to Jerusalem, and residence there. (Chap. xix.—xxv. 46.) The discourses of Christ beyond Jordan : (chap. xix.—xx. 16 :) journeying to Jericho, he foretells his passion, and afterwards heals blind Bartimeus : (chap. xx. 17—34 :) the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem on the Sunday before Easter, called, on that account, "Palm Sunday ;" after which, he casts out the money-changers from the temple : (chap. xxi. 1—17 :) on the following day the barren fig-tree receives the Saviour's malediction, and withers : (verses 18—22 :) on the Tuesday Christ teaches in the temple, where he confutes the chief priests and elders, and afterwards the Pharisees and Sadducees, whom he threatens for

their hypocrisy : his lamentation over Jerusalem : (chap. xxi. 23—xxiii. :) having left the temple, Christ predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world, and delivers several parables. (Chap. xxiv., xxv.)

The fifth part records the Saviour's mysterious passion. (Chap. xxvi., xxvii.) The series of interesting particulars here recorded stand in the following order : On Wednesday Christ foretells his approaching crucifixion to his disciples, and the chief priests conspire to apprehend him : (chap. xxvi. 1—5 :) a woman at Bethany anoints Christ : (verses 6—13 :) on the following day, Thursday, Judas engages to betray his Lord : (verses 14—16 :) the Passover is prepared : (verses 17—19 :) and in the evening Christ partakes of the feast with his disciples, and appoints the sacrament of the Lord's supper : (verses 20—29 :) then, after singing the usual paschal hymn, composed of psalms cxiii.—cxvii., Christ led his disciples to the Mount of Olives, and by the way predicted their speedy and cowardly desertion of their Master, and Peter's denial of him : he then goes to Gethsemane, where his agony begins : soon after which he is apprehended by soldiers, and forsaken by his disciples : (verses 30—75 :) on the following (Friday) morning, Christ is delivered to Pilate : arraigned : Judas kills himself : Christ is led to Calvary and crucified : buried by Joseph, and the sepulchre guarded and sealed by the priests. (Chap. xxvii.)

The sixth part narrates the resurrection of Christ, his appearance to his disciples, and the charge he delivers to them. (Chap. xxviii.)

In order fully to apprehend the scope and design of this evangelist, and to understand and apply rightly the contents of his book, it will be necessary to observe, that he does not place the events and discourses which form the substance of his narration in strict chronological order. If it had been the intention of Matthew to have placed before his readers an exact history of our Redeemer's life and ministry, he would have done this : but that does not appear to have been his main design. He seems rather intent on showing forth Jesus Christ as the Messiah which was promised in the scriptures of the Old Testament, as the Saviour of the world. His book, accordingly, presents such a grouping of its contents as was best adapted to serve this purpose. Its plan is therefore rather doctrinal than strictly historical ; and hence we find facts and discourses which would have been separated from each other if related in the order of time, placed together as if they made



one continued series ; time and place being subordinated in the mind of the evangelist to the unity of the subject, and the complete establishment of his great object, the Messiahship of Jesus.

This Gospel is also distinguished by several peculiarities in words and phrases, which are perhaps principally owing to the Hebrew idiom that he employed. It would not be necessary to notice any of these, had it not been evident that grave distinctions of meaning have sometimes been drawn from what appears to be but accidental variations of expression.

As one instance, it may be observed that the phrase, "the Son of David," which occurs but very seldom in the other evangelists, is used by Matthew at least eight times. So in respect of the appellation given to the gospel economy or spiritual kingdom of Messiah, which in the other Gospels is "the kingdom of God," Matthew has almost always "the kingdom of heaven ;" a phrase which he employs nearly thirty times. It may be added, that Matthew is the only New-Testament writer who has given an account of our Lord's description of the judgment of the great day ; and nothing can exceed the impressive solemnity of his relation respecting that momentous event.

The second of the New-Testament books is **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK**. The identity of the author of this Gospel with any one of the persons mentioned in the New Testament, is not directly stated in any portion of the Christian scriptures. But, notwithstanding this, and the doubts, and even positive disbelief, which it has engendered in many minds, it is most probable that he is the same person who is sometimes called John, (Acts xiii. 5, 13,) and on other occasions John Mark. (Acts xii. 12, 25 ; xv. 37.) This difference was perhaps occasioned by the conformity of this evangelist to a custom commonly observed by those Jews of that day who travelled beyond the limits of Palestine. They usually added a Latin name to their former Hebrew one : so this individual appears to have been first called John, and afterwards assumed the addition of Marcus ; which, in consequence of the prevalence of the Latin language, became at length the name by which he was commonly known. He seems to have been a native of Jerusalem ; as his mother had a house in that city, in which the Christians in early gospel days sometimes assembled for prayer. (Acts xii. 12.) It is probable that his family was wealthy, as his mother was sister of Barnabas, who is distin-

guished for having sold his land, and given the proceeds to the common stock of the apostles. (Acts iv. 36, 37.)

When Paul and Barnabas went on their first missionary journey, Mark accompanied them as far as Perga in Pamphylia, when he offended Paul by leaving the work and returning to Jerusalem. The displeasure of Paul at this conduct was so great, that he afterwards refused to have him for his companion, although Barnabas so greatly desired it; and the disagreement led to the separation of these apostles. It is pleasing, however, to know that these good and useful men were afterward fully reconciled. When Paul was a prisoner at Rome, he wrote to Timothy to bring Mark with him, expressing his confidence in him. Accordingly, we find him afterward at Rome with Paul, and recognised by him as a fellow-labourer. (Col. iv. 10; Philemon 24.) Nothing is known certainly respecting the subsequent history of this evangelist.

The testimony of all antiquity is very explicit as to the long and intimate connexion which subsisted between Mark and the apostle Peter: it has, indeed, been supposed, from a passage in this apostle's first General Epistle, (chap. v. 13,) that he regarded Mark as his son in the gospel; and this is probable from the intimacy subsisting between Peter and the family of Mark. It will be remembered that the first house to which that apostle directed his steps after his miraculous deliverance from prison, was to the dwelling of the evangelist. It is remarkable, however, that this tradition of the connexion between Peter and Mark should have obtained so generally among the early fathers of the church, although no text in the New-Testament scriptures can serve for the foundation of such a notion. But this has been generally thought sufficient to establish the probability that Mark wrote with the aid, and under the inspection, of the venerable apostle.

There can be no question but that, as Matthew wrote primarily for the benefit of converted Hebrews, so Mark composed his Gospel for the instruction of Gentile believers. This is evident from his manner throughout, as he constantly adds such information and explanations as would be quite unnecessary for those who were conversant with the country and manners of the Hebrews, but which were very suitable for strangers.

Many such instances occur, and amongst them the following may be adduced. "Were all baptized of him in *the river of Jordan*;" (chap. i. 5;) Matthew has simply "in Jordan." So, Mark observes, "And the disciples of John and

of the Pharisees used to fast." (Chap. ii. 18.) When Matthew narrates the circumstance, he omits this explanation, and at once introduces the question, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft?" (Matt. ix. 14.) Again, Mark says, "And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, *that is to say, with unwashen*, hands, they found fault. *For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders,*" &c. (Mark vii. 2—4.) All this explanation is omitted by Matthew, who only states the fact. (Matt. xv. 2.) In like manner, speaking of the barren fig-tree, Mark says, "The time of figs was not yet;" (Mark xi. 13;) which is omitted by Matthew. Also, in reference to Barabbas, Mark states, "Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired." (Mark xv. 6.) All these, it will be seen, gave information which would be useful to strangers, but was not necessary for inhabitants of Jerusalem, or Hebrews generally.

The narration of Mark is exceedingly lively, spirited, and descriptive, and is eminently adapted to impress the mind by the freshness and vigour of its style. Some scholars, anxious to give authority to the Vulgate, have laboured to prove that this Gospel was written at Rome, and in the Latin language; but this notion has been abundantly refuted, and its Greek original fully proved.

The Gospel of Mark contains sixteen chapters, and may be divided into three parts.

The first part recites the transactions which took place before Christ entered on his public ministry. (Chap. i. 1—13.) The book opens very suitably for Gentile readers, with an assertion of the Divine Sonship of Christ, and then proceeds to describe the mission and baptism of John: its application to Christ, who is afterwards tempted in the wilderness. (Chap. i. 1—13.)

The second part treats of the ministry of Christ until his going up to Jerusalem to the last passover. (Chap. i. 14—x.) This narrative makes the several passovers the main points of division, and the basis of the adopted classification of events. We have, consequently, the following sections:—

1. The transactions between the first and second passovers. (Chap. i. 14—ii. 22.)

2. The events which occurred between the second and third passovers. (Chap. ii. 23—vi. 56.)

3. The discourses and actions of Christ from the third passover to his arrival in Bethany, just before the fourth passover. (Chap. vii.—x. 52.)



The third part relates the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem, his passion, death, resurrection, and final charge to his apostles. (Chap. xi.—xvi.) This contains an account of the entry of Christ into Jerusalem on the last Sunday of his life. (Chap. xi. 1—11.) The events of the following day (Monday). (Verses 12—19.) The occurrences of Tuesday: the teaching of Christ in the morning: (chap. xi. 20—xii. :) his discourses in the evening. (Chap. xiii.) The events of Wednesday. (Chap. xiv. 1—9.) The transactions of Thursday: Judas offers to betray Christ: the passover prepared. (Verses 10—16.) The occurrences of the passover-day, from Thursday evening to Friday evening: the Lord's supper instituted: Christ's agony in the garden: his arrest, trial, crucifixion, and burial. (Verses 17—xv.) The resurrection of Christ, appearance to his disciples, and final charge to them. (Chap. xvi.)

We have next to direct attention to THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE. The name of this evangelist, Λουκᾶς, *Loukas*, is a contraction of Λουκανός, *Loukanos*, just as Silas is an abbreviated form of Silvanus. Some scholars have supposed this appellation to indicate that Luke was descended from Gentile parents, and that he was either a slave, or had been such, and, having obtained manumission, was what the Romans termed a freedman, as names in this abbreviated form were frequently given to slaves. The supposed identity of this evangelist with the Luke mentioned in Paul's Epistles, (Philemon 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Col. iv. 14,) and who in the last-mentioned passage is called "the beloved physician," has been regarded as opposed to this inference, it having been surmised that a slave would not have been trained to a profession of such importance and responsibility as that of a physician.

This objection, however plausible in appearance, derives all its force from ignorance of the usages of Rome at this period. The higher ranks in the imperial city were disinclined to practise medicine: the healing art was therefore, to a considerable extent, left to freedmen of talent and aptitude for study. This might be proved by numerous references to classic authors: it will, however, be sufficient to refer to the freedman Antonius Musa, who, having cured Augustus of a disease, was raised to the equestrian order, (or, as we should say, to the honour of knighthood,) and a statue of him was erected in the temple of Æsculapius. Antistius, likewise, Julius Cæsar's surgeon, was a freedman.

This conjecture respecting Luke would not be deserving

of so much attention, if it had not been countenanced and supported by the manner in which Paul refers to him. In the Epistle to the Colossians, for instance, (chap. iv. 11—14,) he speaks of Christians "who were of the circumcision," and then mentions Luke separately. Add to this that Eusebius says, Luke was a native of Antioch, where converted Gentiles were living at a very early period. Of the personal history of Luke not much, however, is known with certainty. There seems little doubt that he attached himself to the Apostle Paul at Troas, whilst he was on his second missionary journey. We afterward find the evangelist with the apostle at Philippi, Troas, Miletus, Tyre, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem; and even whilst a prisoner at Rome his faithful friend attended him.

It is indeed manifest, that Luke was the companion and assistant, if not the spiritual son, of the apostle Paul. From this connexion arose the prevalent ancient tradition, that Luke wrote his Gospel under the immediate superintending direction of the apostle; a tradition which is noticed and approved by many of the early fathers of the church.

The immediate purpose for which Luke wrote his Gospel he has himself distinctly stated. It was for the instruction of Theophilus. Who this individual was, we are not informed: that he was not a native of Judea, may be inferred from the many explanatory phrases used by Luke, very similar in kind to those noticed in Mark's Gospel, and which would never have been employed in writing for the use of a native Hebrew: such as, "And abode in the Mount *that is called the Mount of Olives*." (Chap. xxi. 37.) "And came down to Caper-naum, *a city of Galilee*." (Chap. iv. 31.) "Unto *a city of Galilee, named Nazareth*." (Chap. i. 26.) "A village called Emmaus, *which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs*." (Chap. xxiv. 13.) Further indications of this kind are found in Luke's tracing up the genealogy of our Lord to the first man, and his particular mention of several matters of special interest to Gentile believers. (Chap. ii. 32; iv. 25—27; x. 30—37; xvii. 11—19; ix. 51—56.)

This Gospel is not only interesting and important in other respects, but it contains exceedingly valuable accounts, not found in the books of the other evangelists. For instance, those concerning the childhood of Jesus, the admirable parables in chapters xv. and xvi., and the narration respecting the disciples at Emmaus. Indeed the section from chapter ix. 51, to xix. 27, contains particulars mostly wanting in the other evangelists.

In speaking of the contents of this Gospel, attention must first be directed to that part which has no parallel in any New-Testament book; namely, the preface. Without discovering in it all that many theorizing authors have pretended to find, this must be regarded as a very valuable, though brief, introduction to the book. It communicates important information on several points of interest. First, it tells us that, before the time of Luke's penning his Gospel, many others had endeavoured to set forth in writing a narrative of the life, death, and teaching of the Saviour, which constituted the faith of Christian believers. These writers are, however, distinguished from "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." It is therefore probable, that Luke refers to converted Gentiles, who were but imperfectly informed respecting the subjects of which they wrote. Secondly, we are told of the qualifications which the evangelist possessed for the task he had undertaken. "Having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first." He had traced up all the accounts accurately to their sources, had investigated the subject from its origin, and carefully separated the true from the false. Thirdly, he proposes to write "in order;" that is, on a settled plan, and under a careful and deliberate arrangement. But this language must not be construed to promise the detail of events in exact chronological order, as it will be shown hereafter that this was not done. Fourthly, we are told that his object in writing was to give his reader "a knowledge of the certainty of those things" which he had been taught respecting the foundation of his faith. It is clear that Luke does not put himself forward as an eye-witness of the matters which he relates; but rather as having received his information in the most complete and authentic manner from those who had been more highly favoured, and had arranged it so as to answer the end which he proposed in writing to Theophilus.

The general contents of Luke's Gospel may be divided into four parts.

The first part contains a narrative of the birth and childhood of John the Baptist and of Jesus. (Chap. i. 4—ii.) This account is not only beautifully simple, and exceedingly full and complete as a narrative, but is greatly enriched by the song of Mary, the prophecy of Zacharias, and the address of good old Simeon.

The second part treats of the ministry of John, and the circumstances which took place preparatory to Christ's entry on his public ministry. (Chap. iii.—iv. 13.) We have here an



account of John's preaching and baptism : his baptizing of Christ : the genealogy of Jesus, and his temptation in the wilderness.

The third part comprehends the preaching, miracles, and actions of Jesus Christ throughout the whole of his ministry. (Chap. iv. 14—ix. 50.) This part may be read and studied in the following sections : Christ preaches at Nazareth : (chap. iv. 14—30 :) performs many miracles, and teaches at Capernaum, and in other parts of Galilee : (verses 31—44 :) the call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John : (chap. v. 1—11 :) Christ heals a leper and a paralytic : (verses 12—26 :) the call of Matthew : (verses 27—32 :) Christ explains the reason why his disciples do not fast : (verses 33—39 :) he justifies his disciples for plucking corn on the sabbath-day, and performs a miraculous cure : (chap. vi. 1—11 :) appoints the twelve apostles : (verses 12—16 :) descends from a mountain, and repeats a considerable portion of the sermon which he had delivered on the Mount : (verses 17—49 :) heals the centurion's servant, and raises from the dead the widow's son at Nain : (chap. vii. 1—17 :) Christ's reply to John's disciples, and remarks respecting John : (verses 18—35 :) the feet of Jesus anointed in the house of Simon : (verses 36—50 :) Christ again preaches throughout Galilee, where he delivers the parable of the sower : (chap. viii. 1—15 :) Christ declares the duty and calling of his disciples, and shows who are esteemed by him as his dearest relations : (verses 16—21 :) he stills a tempest by his word, and expels a legion of demons : (verses 22—39 :) he cures the issue of blood, and raises the daughter of Jairus : (verses 40—56 :) the apostles sent forth to preach : Herod the tetrarch desires to see Jesus : (chap. ix. 1—9 :) Christ miraculously feeds five thousand : their opinions concerning him : the duty of taking up the cross : (verses 10—27 :) the transfiguration : (verses 28—36 :) Christ casts out a demon which his disciples could not expel : (verses 37—42 :) forewarns his disciples of his sufferings and death, exhorts to humility, and teaches that those who really propagate the gospel are on no account to be hindered. (Verses 43—50.)

The fourth part contains an account of our Saviour's last journey to Jerusalem, with all the events relating to his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. (Chap. ix. 51—xxiv.) This part may be conveniently divided into six sections :—

1. The events which transpired from the time when Christ left Galilee to go up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of tabernacles, to his leaving that city after the feast. The Samaritans

refuse to receive Christ : (chap. ix. 51—56 :) his reply to some who proposed to follow him : (verses 57—62 :) the seventy disciples sent forth to preach. (Chap. x. 1—16.)

2. Transactions which occurred between the time of Christ's departure from Jerusalem after the feast of tabernacles, and his return thither to the feast of dedication the same year. The return of the seventy disciples : (chap. x. 17—24 :) the story of the good Samaritan : (verses 25—37 :) Christ at the house of Mary and Martha : (verses 38—42 :) he teaches his disciples to pray, and urges the necessity of zeal, importunity, and faith : (chap. xi. 1—13 :) his reply to those Jews who ascribed his casting out devils to the power of Beelzebub : (verses 14—28 :) his answer to those who asked a sign from heaven : (verses 29—36 :) he reproves the Pharisees : (verses 37—54 :) Christ cautions his disciples against hypocrisy, and the neglect of their duty to God through fear of man : (chap. xii. 1—12 :) cautions them also against worldly-mindedness, and exhorts to give paramount attention to spiritual things : (verses 13—34 :) admonishes to be always prepared for death : the reward of the faithful, and doom of the disobedient : (verses 35—48 :) Christ blames the people for not discerning the proofs of his true character : (verses 49—59 :) Divine judgments are designed to bring to repentance those who witness them : the parable of the fig-tree : (chap. xiii. 1—9 :) Christ cures a woman on the sabbath-day, and delivers the parable of the grain of mustard-seed : (verses 10—21 :) journeying toward Jerusalem, he enjoins instant repentance, reproves Herod, and laments the judicial blindness of Jerusalem. (Verses 22—35.)

3. Events which occurred between the feast of dedication and the last passover. Christ on the sabbath-day heals a man afflicted with dropsy, and enjoins humility and charity : (chap. xiv. 1—14 :) the parable of the great supper : (verses 15—24 :) the true and spurious Christian : (verses 25—35 :) he shows the joy of heaven over repenting sinners : (chap. xv. :) the parable of the unjust steward : (chap. xvi. 1—13 :) the Pharisees reprov'd for covetousness and hypocrisy : (verses 14—18 :) the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus : (verses 19—31 :) the duty of avoiding offences : (chap. xvii. 1—10 :) journeying toward Jerusalem, Christ heals ten lepers, and speaks of his second coming : (verses 11—37 :) encouragement to perseverance in prayer : the importunate widow : (chap. xviii. 1—8 :) self-righteousness reprov'd, and humility encouraged : the Pharisee and the publican : (verses 9—14 :) Christ encourages young children to be brought to him, and discourses

with a rich young man : (verses 15—30 :) Christ again predicts his death, and cures a blind man near Jericho : (verses 31—43 :) the account of Zaccheus : (chap. xix. 1—10 :) the parable of going into a far country. (Verses 11—27.)

4. The events which took place from the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem unto his death. On the Sunday before his death Christ, riding toward the city from the Mount of Olives, weeps over it, and, entering, purges the temple. (Chap. xix. 28—46.) On Monday, during the day, he teaches in the temple. (Verses 47, 48.) On Tuesday, again teaching in the temple, he confutes the chief priests, scribes, and elders : (chap. xx. :) the godly liberality of a poor widow commended : (chap. xxi. 1—4 :) in the evening, on the Mount of Olives, Christ foretells the destruction of the temple, and speaks of the last judgment : delivers the parable of the fig-tree, and discourses on the duty of watchfulness. (Verses 5—38.) On Wednesday, the chief priests consult how they may kill Christ. (Chap. xxii. 1—3.) On Thursday, Judas agrees to betray his Master : Christ sends two disciples to prepare the passover. (Verses 4—13.) On Thursday evening, the beginning of the passover day, Christ eats the passover with his disciples, institutes the Lord's supper, teaches humility, foretells his betrayal by Judas, his being abandoned by his disciples, and denied by Peter. (Verses 14—38.) Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives, is in an agony, is apprehended. (Verses 39—53.) In the course of the night Jesus, having been conducted to the high-priest's house, is there denied by Peter, and mocked by his guards. (Verses 54—65.) At day-break he is brought before the sanhedrim, (verses 66—71,) by whom he is delivered to Pilate : he sends him to Herod, who sends him back to Pilate, by whom he is given up to be crucified. (Chap. xxii. 1—31.) On the third hour of this day (Friday) Jesus is nailed to the cross, his garments divided, the inscription on his cross, his promise to the penitent thief. (Verses 32—43.) "From the sixth to the ninth hour," the preternatural darkness, rending of the veil, the death of Christ, and the circumstances which arose out of that event. (Verses 44—49.) After the ninth hour, Jesus is interred by Joseph of Arimathea. (Verses 50—56.)

5. Events which took place after the resurrection on Easter-day. The women who went to the sepulchre informed by an angel of Christ's resurrection : (chap. xxiv. 1—11 :) Christ appears to two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and also to Peter : (verses 12—35 :) his appearance to his apostles, and instructions to them. (Verses 36—49.)



6. The ascension of Christ, and the return of the apostles to Jerusalem. (Verses 50—52.)

From a careful consideration of the contents of this Gospel, it is evident that Luke did not purpose writing a chronological narrative, but rather a methodical account of the life, ministry, and actions of our Lord, so arranged as to afford the most clear and convincing exhibition of the life, doctrines, miracles, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In the execution of this purpose, whilst there is an attention to the order of time, there is also an arrangement of events such as is not unfrequently found in classic history, by which chronological succession is sometimes departed from, in order to insure the most effective grouping of the circumstances which he had to record.

If we had not been informed, by the inspired authority of Paul, that Luke was a member of a learned profession, his book would have afforded sufficient proof that he was an erudite person. He describes the various diseases which come under his notice with singular propriety and felicity; his language is pure, copious, and flowing; and his sentences are arranged with great skill and precision; while none has equalled him in the combination of sweetness and simplicity in reciting the Redeemer's parables, particularly in those of the good Samaritan and the prodigal son.

The last of the four books termed "Gospels," is that of **ST. JOHN**. Its author is spoken of as "the beloved disciple" of Jesus. He was the son of Zebedee, who was apparently in easy circumstances; for, although but a fisherman, he had at least a boat, nets, and hired servants, (Mark i. 20,) and his mother Salome not only ministered to the Lord of her substance during his life, but joined with other women in the purchase of spices, for the purpose of embalming his body after his crucifixion. It also appears that John received Mary, the mother of Jesus, into his house at Jerusalem. (John xix. 27.) His having a house in the capital, as well as a residence at Bethsaida, and his acquaintance with the high-priest, (chap. xviii. 15,) together with the circumstances previously mentioned, show that the family of John possessed some substance and distinction.

After the ascension, John abode at Jerusalem, where (about A.D. 52) Paul met him when on his third journey. We have no means of ascertaining when this apostle left the Hebrew capital; but there can be no doubt that he lived to a great age, and spent the latter part of his life in Asia Minor, principally

at Ephesus. The uniform tradition of Christian antiquity reports that John, after enduring severe persecution, was banished to Patmos, one of the Sporadic Isles in the Ægean Sea. Principally because it has been found impossible to ascertain the time and circumstances of this exile, many modern critics have doubted its occurrence. But when it is considered that this ancient tradition is supported by the distinct testimony of the book of Revelation, (chap. i. 9,) believers in holy scripture will not hesitate to admit the fact of the apostle's banishment, although unable to discover by whom it was commanded, or when it took place. The best information which we can obtain on these subjects will be given when we come to consider the Apocalypse.

Various theories have been propounded respecting the object and design which the apostle had in writing this Gospel. A large class of critics have supposed his design to have been polemical, or controversial; in other words, that John, having lived long enough to witness the rise and progress of many errors and heresies in the church, wrote his Gospel for the purpose of condemning them, and of asserting the truth by which they were opposed. If we had no other reply to make to this notion, it would be sufficient to point out the diversity which obtains among those who maintain it, as to the errors or heresies here combated. Some think it was levelled against the tenets of the Ebionites, or Judaising Christians; others, that it was specially directed against the Gnostics, or Cerinthus, the chief of them, whose teaching invalidated the doctrine of the Divine Sonship, by maintaining that the Supreme God generated an only-begotten son, Monogenes, and that this produced an inferior spiritual being, Logos, or the Word; that *Christ* was a still lower spiritual existence, or æon; and that it was this Christ which became united with Jesus at his baptism, who before was a mere man, and the natural son of Joseph and Mary, but of illustrious sanctity of life, and that, when Jesus entered on his course of suffering, the Christ ascended to heaven, and left the mere humanity of Jesus to die. Others refer to various other early errors which they imagine this Gospel was written mainly to refute; whilst many regard it as a kind of supplementary Gospel, designed to supply what had been omitted by the then preceding evangelists.

I regard all this, when exhibited as the object of the apostle, as fanciful and unsound. There can be no doubt that he has accurately and honestly set forth his purpose and design in the following important and explicit passage: "These are written,

that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (Chap. xx. 31.) This great and grand purpose led the apostle to the composition of this portion of scripture. To place before the mind of the reader such an account of the life, actions, miracles, discourses, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Saviour, as should prove him to be the long-promised Messiah, the Son of God, and lead to such a hearty reception of him in that character, as should make the recipient alive from the dead in him,—this was the apostle’s purpose. But, then, in doing this, he might, and certainly did, direct his mind to prevailing errors, and deliver truth eminently adapted to check their progress, and counteract their influence. He might also dwell, with especial care and fulness, on those actions and discourses of the Saviour which were either omitted, or but briefly recorded, by the other evangelists. The references to existing heresy, and its refutation, will be noticed when we come to consider the contents of this Gospel ; but the apparent contradictions and disagreements which are supposed to have been found between the statements of John and of the other evangelists shall now be considered in order.

The first of these refers to the last passover recorded in the Gospels. Matthew, (xxvi. 17—20,) Mark, (xiv. 12,) and Luke, (xxii. 7,) all agree that the Thursday which preceded the crucifixion of Christ was the day on which the Jews killed the passover ; that the disciples, under the direction of Christ, prepared it for him ; and that he with them supped on it in the evening. Yet John says that on the Friday morning, the Jews “ went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled ; but that they might eat the passover : ” (chap. xviii. 28 : ) words which have been understood to teach, that the passover was to be killed and eaten on that day. Various theories have been devised for the purpose of solving this difficulty. Some have supposed that our Saviour on the Thursday instituted the Lord’s supper, after partaking of an ordinary evening meal with his disciples. Others, and Dr. Adam Clarke among the number, believe, that Christ, on the evening of Thursday, ate the passover, and that, according to Jewish computation, it was on the same day, but not in the same hour, when it was eaten by the Jews ; their day beginning in the evening at sunset, and Jesus having eaten his passover the Thursday evening after that time, and they on the Friday afternoon. So that at the same hour that the Jewish public generally were shedding the blood of their paschal lambs, “ Christ our passover was sacri-



ficed for us." This would be an interesting solution of the difficulty, if it could be received. Not to mention other notions, yet more unsatisfactory, it will be sufficient to show the fallacy of these. That Christ did partake of the passover, and not of an ordinary meal, is evident from the entire tenour of the accounts given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and especially from the fact, that these arrangements for the preparation of the passover were not made by the special command of Jesus, but at the suggestion of the disciples; and we are told that what they purposed was done; for "they made ready the passover." (Matt. xxvi. 19.) Nor is there more weight in the opinion, that Christ ate this sacred feast at a different time from the Jewish people: for, as the provision was made on the motion of the disciples, they would, of course, make it at the proper, usual, and orthodox time. Besides, according to the Jewish custom, the passover was eaten after sunset; and, consequently, neither the Saviour nor the Jews could have taken it at the regular time, and on the same day. But it may be asked, "How, then, is the statement of John to be reconciled to those of the other evangelists?" We think very easily. The passover proper was called by the later Jews "the passover of the lamb:" this was followed on the next day by what was distinguished as "the passover of sheep and bullocks." (Deut. xvi. 2; Num. xxviii. 17—19.) This latter is clearly referred to when the celebration was revived by king Josiah. (2 Chron. xxxv. 1—16.) It was this, therefore, of which John speaks; alluding, not to the paschal lamb, but to the passover sacrifice and feast, which took place on the following day.\*

Another important discrepancy between John and the other evangelists respects the account of Jesus just before he was apprehended, the conduct of Christ in delivering up a prayer full of sublimity and confidence just before he went down to Gethsemane as given by John, being regarded as incompatible with the description of the mental agony which he endured in that garden, as recorded by the other evangelists, but respecting which John is quite silent. It appears to me that this objection arises out of very low and unworthy views of the Saviour's Divine character. Let the reader begin to read Christ's great sacrificial prayer; (John xvii. 1—12;) then pass on to his supplication for unity; (verses 13—26;) and proceed with the account of his future conduct and warning to Peter; (Matt. xxvi. 30—35; Mark xiv.

\* See GODWIN'S "Moses and Aaron," lib. iii.; and WATSON'S "Exposition," Matt. xxvi. 17.

26—31 ; Luke xxii. 39 ; John xviii. 1 ;) and then peruse the account of his agony : (Matt. xxvi. 36—46 ; Mark xiv. 32—42 ; Luke xxii. 40—46 :) and I am bold to assert that nothing will present itself to the mind but a regular series of consistent action and utterance, worthy of the Divine Immanuel, the world's Redeemer.

A third objection has been taken to the striking difference which is found between the addresses of Christ, as delivered by the other evangelists, when compared with them as reported by John. On this point, it is only necessary to observe, that as no contradiction can be alleged, it is only difference of manner which we have to investigate ; and careful inquiry will soon convince any person, that, whilst the other evangelists carefully collected the parables, brief sayings, and short weighty sentences, which fell from the lips of the Saviour, John generally confines his reports to his more lengthened addresses, and that he gives these in a manner peculiarly his own.

Much has been said respecting the peculiarities of this evangelist ; and these have been, by an eminent living critic, resolved into the following doctrines : 1. That of the mystical relation of the Son to the Father. 2. That of the mystical relation of the Redeemer to believers. 3. The announcement of the Holy Ghost as the Comforter. 4. The peculiar importance ascribed to love. Now, if these be considered by an enlightened Christian, it will appear that they are evidences of a clear perception of the most profound sublimities of the scheme of redemption, rather than what can be properly called literary or doctrinal peculiarities. These will all, when thus regarded, appear to be great spiritual realities, far removed from the mere surface of external law, but deeply inwrought into the economy of grace. These, therefore, instead of appearing as difficulties, or casting any doubt on the Gospel in which they are found, are rather precisely what might be expected to appear, in revelations of Divine truth coming to the church through the best beloved disciple of Jesus, after he had lived long in the experience of sanctifying grace, and had fully witnessed the progress of gospel truth in the world.

I now proceed to furnish a brief analysis of the contents of this book. These may be divided into three parts.

The first part consists of an introduction, composed of doctrinal propositions, asserting great elements of Divine truth, in opposition to errors then existing and prevalent. (Chap. i. 1—18.)

1. Besides asserting a plurality of persons in the Deity by

the terms, "The Word was with God, and the Word was God," this passage shows that the *Word*, or *Logos*, was not an inferior spiritual existence, but really and truly a Divine Person; thus contradicting the essential *dictum* of Cerinthus. (Chap. i. 1.)

2. That the Logos and Demiurgus were not two, but one and the same Divine Person, inasmuch as the world was made by the Word. (Verses 3, 10.)

3. That life and light are not separate and distinct spirits, as Cerinthus taught, but the same with the Logos; (verses 4, 7—9, 17;) and therefore that the Logos, light, and life are not distinct spiritual beings or æons, but one and the same Divine Person.

4. That the Divine Person incarnated in the humanity of Jesus, was Christ, and the only-begotten One; consequently, that the former is not separate from and inferior to the latter, but the same; and that this Christ is the same with the Word. (Verse 14.)

5. That no spiritual being under the name of "light" entered John the Baptist, to give him a knowledge of the Divine will, as Cerinthus had taught; but that, on the contrary, he was a mere man, and therefore infinitely inferior to Christ. (Verses 6—9, 15.)

6. That the God of the Jews was not an inferior Divinity, but the Lord Christ, who is truly Divine. (Verse 11.)

The second part contains a detailed proof of these doctrines, in an historical record of the life, discourses, and actions of Christ. (Chap. i. 19—xx. 29.) These, as given in this Gospel, may be conveniently exhibited in the following sections.

1. John the Baptist confesses his inferiority to Christ: points him out to his disciples as the Lamb of God: they follow him, and confess him to be the Christ, and are confirmed in their faith by the miracle at Cana. (Chap. i. 19—ii. 11.)

2. Jesus purges the temple, reveals his true character to Nicodemus, and shows the design of his coming, and the necessity of believing on him. (Chap. ii. 12—iii. 21.)

3. John the Baptist's further testimony to the Messiahship of Christ. (Chap. iii. 22—36.)

4. Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah to the Samaritans, and foretells the abolition of the Mosaical worship. (Chap. iv. 1—42.)

5. Christ further demonstrates his true character in Galilee by the cure of the nobleman's son. (Verses 43—54.)



6. Jesus exhibits further miraculous proofs of his Messiahship. (Chap. v.)

7. Jesus miraculously feeds five thousand, walks on the sea, and avows himself to be the bread of life, and the life of the world. (Chap. vi.)

8. Jesus reproves the ambition of his brethren, and at the feast of tabernacles teaches the people, and promises the effusion of the Holy Ghost on those who believed in him. (Chap. vii.)

9. A woman taken in adultery being brought to Jesus, he makes it an occasion of a powerful appeal to the consciences of the people. (Chap. viii. 1—11.)

10. Jesus declares himself to be the light of the world, proves the Jews to be unworthy of being regarded as the children of Abraham, and declares himself to have existed prior to Abraham. (Verses 12—59.)

11. Jesus shows himself to be the light of the world, by giving sight to a man who had been born blind: the Jews, cavilling at this cure, are confounded by the poor man: to whom Jesus afterward declared himself, and pronounces condemnation on the Jews for their obstinate unbelief. (Chap. ix.)

12. Jesus exhibits his character, sacrifice, and mission, by the parable of the office and duties of a shepherd. (Chap. x.)

13. The story of Lazarus and his miraculous resurrection. (Chap. xi. 1—44.)

14. A short account of the different effects which this miracle produced on the minds of the Jews. (Chap. xi. 45—xii. 11.)

15. Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem: he teaches the people. (Chap. xii. 12—50.)

16. Christ washes his disciples' feet, teaches them humility, and gives them the new commandment. (Chap. xiii.)

17. By the figure of a vine and its branches, Christ teaches the necessity of a living union with himself, and proceeds, in a long discourse, to promise the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to enforce the duty of mutual affection. (Chap. xiv.—xvi.)

18. Christ's sacrificial prayer. (Chap. xvii.)

19. A detailed account of the passion, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ. (Chap. xviii.—xx. 29.) This is amply sufficient to show that Jesus did not die as a mere man, and that he did truly rise from the dead.

The third part contains an account of the writer of this Gospel, and of his design in its composition. (Chap. xx. 30—xxi.)

As I have previously hinted, the careful reader will find that John has altogether omitted all notice of some very interesting and important events in our Lord's history, such as his nativity, baptism by John, temptation in the wilderness, the calling and names of the twelve apostles, his sending them forth to preach during his life, his parables, &c. But although these are unmentioned by him, they are fully recorded in the other evangelists, while this apostle gives us a vast amount of most important information which they had omitted: so that we have ample reason for praising the Lord for the full and complete account which these several books afford respecting the life, teaching, and actions of our blessed Redeemer.

The ACTS OF THE APOSTLES is the last of the historical books of the New Testament, and follows in beautiful sequence the several Gospel narratives. They having supplied all the necessary information respecting the life, teaching, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord; the Book of the Acts comes to tell us of the wonderful establishment of the kingdom of God in the earth by the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the successive triumphs of a preached gospel in the world. To this important portion of New-Testament scripture I now direct your attention.

The author of this book was unquestionably Luke the evangelist. This is manifest from the first verse, taken in connexion with the introduction to Luke's Gospel; the Theophilus mentioned in both clearly identifying the books as having proceeded from the same pen. The uniform testimony of antiquity fully corroborates this conclusion; which is also supported by the general sameness of the style, and the fact that Luke is known to have had the means of obtaining the information here recorded.

The design of Luke in writing the Acts of the Apostles has occasioned much discussion. Was it, for instance, as some have alleged, his purpose to write an ecclesiastical history of the first age of Christianity? It has, indeed, been generally considered that Luke, having in his Gospel given a history of the life of Christ, intended to follow it up by supplying in the Acts a narrative of the establishment and early progress of the Christian religion in the world. I mention this prevalent and popular opinion for the purpose of cautioning you against the reception of it. It is certain that this could not have been the design of Luke, from the very partial and limited view which his narrative gives of the state of things in the church generally

during the period through which it extends. Nor can we even receive this book as an official history of the apostles Peter and Paul; for there are many important particulars relating to them of which he takes no notice. Compare 2 Cor. ix.; Gal. i. 17; ii. 11; 1 Peter v. 13. Affected by these difficulties, some writers have thought that no particular design should be ascribed to the evangelist. But probably the following passage from the pen of an eminent scholar affords the soundest view of this subject: "Perhaps we should come still closer to the truth if we were to say, that the design of Luke in writing the Acts was to supply, by select and suitable instances, an illustration of the power and working of that religion which Jesus had died to establish. In his Gospel he had presented to his readers an exhibition of Christianity as embodied in the person, character, and works of its great Founder; and having followed him in his narration until he was taken up out of the sight of his disciples into heaven, this second work was written to show how his religion operated when committed to the hands of those by whom it was to be announced to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. In this point of view the recitals in this book present a theme that is practically interesting to Christians in all ages of the church, and all places of the world; for they exhibit to us what influences guided the actions of those who laid the foundations of the church, and to whose authority all its members must defer; what courses they adopted for the extension of the church; what ordinances they appointed to be observed by those Christians who, under their auspices, associated together for mutual edification; and what difficulties, privations, and trials, were to be expected by those who should zealously exert themselves for the triumph of Christianity. We are thus taught, not by dogmatical statement, but by instructive narrative, under what sanctions Christianity appears in our world, what blessings she offers to men, and by what means her influence is most extensively to be promoted, and the blessings she offers to be most widely and most fully enjoyed." \*

If we were here to close our reference to the events contained in this book, it would be incumbent on us to ascertain as clearly as possible their chronology; a most important and not a very easy task. But this will be deferred to the lecture in which we shall consider the history of the primitive church. We therefore pass on to a review of the contents of this portion of holy writ. These may be divided into two parts; the first, in which Peter is the principal agent in the foundation

\* The Rev. W. L. ALEXANDER, M.A.



and establishment of the church; (chap. i.—xii.;) and the second, where the evangelical labours and successes of Paul are the main subjects. (Chap. xiii.—xxviii.) But it does not appear desirable to adopt such a mode of arrangement, as holy scripture never makes human action so prominent as to justify it. I shall, therefore, prefer the division of this book into three parts.

The first part describes the rise and progress of the Christian church in Judea, from the ascension of Christ to the first Jewish persecution. (Chap. i.—viii.)

This includes the events which immediately preceded and followed the ascension: (chap. i.): the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and Peter's sermon: (chap. ii.): an account of the miraculous cure of the lame man by Peter and John: Peter's discourse on that occasion: the events which resulted from this conduct: (chap. iii., iv.): the death of Ananias and Sapphira: miracles of the apostles: the Jewish council confounded by their answers: the apostles scourged and dismissed: (chap. v.): deacons appointed: the speech and martyrdom of Stephen: the first Jewish persecution. (Chap. vi.—viii. 4.)

The second part contains principally those transactions which occurred beyond the city of Jerusalem, and which were mainly directed to prepare the way for the general diffusion of the gospel. (Chap. viii. 5—xii.)

We have here the planting of the church in Samaria by the ministry of Philip, the deacon: (chap. viii. 5—25:) the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch: (verses 26—40:) the conversion, baptism, and preaching of Paul: (chap. ix. 1—31:) miracles performed by Peter, and the conversion of Cornelius and his family, the first Gentile converts: (chap. ix. 32—xi. 18:) the Gentile church at Antioch founded: (chap. xi. 19—30:) the apostle James put to death by Herod Agrippa, who miserably dies. (Chap. xii.)

The third part details the missionary operations undertaken for the conversion of the more remote Gentiles, principally by Paul and his associates. (Chap. xiii.—xxviii.)

This part contains an account of the planting of Christian churches in Cyprus, Perga in Pamphilia, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe: the return of Paul to Antioch: (chap. xiii., xiv.): the question concerning the obligation of Gentile converts to be circumcised and observe the ritual law, discussed by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem: their letter to the churches on this subject: (chap. xv. 1—35:) Paul leaves

Antioch a second time: he preaches the gospel to the churches which he had previously founded, thence passes into other countries: at Philippi the apostle and his companion are beaten and imprisoned: the jailer and his family converted: (chap. xv. 36—41; xvi. :) Paul and his associates labour in Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens: his masterly address on Mars' Hill: (chap. xvii. :) Paul journeys to Corinth, and thence to Antioch: (chap. xviii. 1—22 :) Paul departs from Antioch the third time: he preaches at Ephesus: its results: (chap. xviii. 23—xix. :) the ministry of Paul in Greece and Asia Minor, and his journey to Jerusalem: (chap. xx. :) the persecution of Paul at Jerusalem: he is sent a prisoner to Cæsarea: (chap. xxi.—xxiii. 30 :) Paul at Cæsarea is tried before Felix: appeals to Cæsar: his defence before Agrippa: (chap. xxiii. 31—xxvi. :) narrative of Paul's voyage from Cæsarea: his shipwreck at Malta: his voyage to Italy, and journey to Rome, where he preaches the gospel to the Jews, and resides for two years. (Chap. xxvii., xxviii.)

From this brief analysis of this second treatise of Luke on evangelical history, it will be seen that the title given to it in our canon is at once too comprehensive and too narrow. It is too comprehensive; for the book does not contain an account of the actions of all the apostles. So far from this, it scarcely mentions the doings of any of them, except Peter and Paul. At the same time the phrase used as a title is too limited in sense; for we have here much important and interesting information respecting the ministry, labours, and sufferings of several who were not numbered with the apostles; such as Stephen, Philip, Silas, and others.

This book closes the historical portion of the New Testament; and a careful perusal of the Acts of the Apostles in connexion with the four Gospels, cannot be too earnestly recommended to the Christian student. Here, in fact, are seen, in living and mighty operation, all those great principles which comprise the gospel system of salvation. Here, too, are seen, although in some instances in a latent and incipient state, most of those great errors which arose, in after years, to adulterate the truth, and pervert the way of the Lord. Let us then, my brethren, so study these pages of Divine truth, that we may not be led astray by any guile or tempting influence; but be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

We now come to the epistolary or doctrinal part of the New

Testament. This approximates more closely in character to the Book of Psalms than to any other portion of holy writ. For it not only affords a rich revelation of Divine truth, but presents this in the living experience of the people of God. This is a very important consideration. In the historical part of the New Testament we have a full enumeration of the facts which form the foundation of our faith. Here we come to ascertain that doctrinal truth which all these combined to teach; and we have it not only in law, precept, admonition, and promise, but also wrought up into actual life, giving a character to the conduct, a new tone to the feelings, desires, and purposes of the mind, and kindling in the soul a new and Divine life, of which Christ is the soul and the centre.

The far larger proportion of these epistles comes to us from the pen of the Apostle Paul. And no more suitable instrument could possibly have been charged with this important duty. He was a man of mighty intellect and great genius, with a brilliant imagination and intense feelings; and his acquired abilities were commensurate with his natural powers. A thorough proficient in all Hebrew learning, and a devout observer of the Mosaic law, he was equally versed in Gentile literature, and stood, according to the opinion of the great Longinus, high among the most celebrated orators of Greece. To these endowments the apostle added a rich experience of gospel salvation, an unquenchable desire for the conversion of mankind, and a boundless zeal for the honour and glory of his God. With these powers, this divinely taught apostle, after having ministered the gospel through many countries, availed himself of every suitable opportunity to supplement his preaching labours, by writing letters of advice, instruction, and admonition to the churches to whom he had ministered, or who had otherwise a claim on his kind attention, or to individuals similarly circumstanced. In these Epistles we have a rich fund of doctrinal and experimental gospel truth.

The first of the Pauline Epistles, according to the order of the canon, is that addressed to THE ROMANS. It was written to the Christian converts at Rome. We do not know when, or by whom, this church was founded; but it seems sufficiently clear, that it had not up to this time enjoyed the privilege of a resident apostolic ministry. For the apostle longed to see them, that he might "impart unto" them "some spiritual gift," which he would scarcely have said, if any other apostle had been with them. It is, of course, well known that this



question affects the basis upon which the exclusive claims of the Papacy are made to rest; namely, on the fact that Peter was bishop of Rome, and bequeathed his powers to his successors in perpetuity. This deserves attention, although our notice must be brief.

It is alleged, then, that Peter not only lived at Rome, but was bishop of that city for twenty-five years. Let us see how this agrees with facts distinctly recorded by the apostles. We have already seen, from the language of Paul, that it is not probable that any apostle had ministered in Rome when he wrote this Epistle, A.D. 58. Peter was at the council of Jerusalem in the twelfth year of the Emperor Claudius, A.D. 49. (Acts xv.) Luke, when speaking of Paul's coming to Rome, A.D. 57, although he mentions brethren going to meet him, makes no reference to Peter, which he certainly would have done, if the apostle had been in the city. In all the epistles written by Paul from Rome, although he sends the salutations of many, he never mentions Peter. Lastly, when Paul was with Peter in Jerusalem, it was mutually agreed that the former should devote himself to the Gentiles, and the latter to the Jews; and we have not the slightest proof that they departed from this arrangement; for, when Peter was at Antioch, the Jews appear to have engaged his principal attention. It seems, therefore, sufficiently clear that Peter never went to Rome.

It appears to have been the apostle's object in this Epistle, to set forth the great essential truths of the gospel in their perfect suitability to the circumstances of the guilty and depraved nature of fallen man; and, as will be seen from the analysis of its contents, specially adapted to the different circumstances of the parties addressed; namely, converted Hebrews, imbued with all the prejudices peculiar to the nation, and awakened Gentiles still in some measure under the influence of former errors.

The Epistle to the Romans may be divided into four parts,—the introduction—doctrines—admonitions—conclusion.

The introduction is remarkable for vigour and comprehensiveness. The first sentence extends over seven verses, every member of which conveys a distinct and important sense. (Chap. i. 1—15.)

The second part is doctrinal, and may be regarded as comprising two sections.

1. The first opens with a declaration of the power and extent of the gospel: (chap. i. 16, 17:) this salvation is not to be attained by works, in the case of the Gentiles: (verses 18—

32 :) nor in that of the Jews : (chap. ii., iii. 1—18 :) consequently, both are under the guilt and power of sin : (chap. iii. 19, 20 :) but salvation is attainable by faith : justification being by it alone : (verses 21—31 :) as is seen by the case of Abraham, and from the language of David. (Chap. iv.) The Apostle then proceeds to explain, illustrate, and apply this doctrine, showing the fruits of justification : (chap. v. 1—5 :) its procuring cause, (verses 6—11,) and its necessity : (verses 12—14 :) and further maintains that the grace of God through Christ more than counteracts the effects of Adam's sin. (Verses 15—21.) The objection that *this doctrine is unfavourable to holiness* is then refuted : (chap. vi. 1—11 :) and righteousness of life enjoined. (Verses 12—23.) The apostle, having thus shown that the law cannot justify, and that those who are justified by faith are regenerated unto holiness of life, proceeds to prove that the law can no more regenerate than it can justify, by setting forth, in the case of an awakened sinner, its convicting and condemning power : (chap. vii. 1—24 :) without the possibility of its procuring deliverance, which is to be obtained only by faith in Christ. (Verse 25.) Then follows a rapid recital of the privileges of those who are thus justified by faith ; which clearly demonstrates that in the seventh chapter the apostle speaks of an awakened yet unregenerate person. (Chap. viii. 1—16.) In a long argumentative parenthesis he proves that “ the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,” showing, in the exercise of patient hope by believers, one of the chief offices of the Holy Spirit in “ making intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” (Verses 18—27.) The true basis of election is next enunciated : those “ who are *the called* according to the purpose of God,” and foreknown by him, “ are predestinated to be conformed to the image of *his Son* ;” that as in their unregenerate condition “ they have borne the image of the earthy,” or first Adam, they may in their renewed state “ bear the image of the heavenly Adam ;” thus “ putting off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ; and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Verses 28—30.) He closes the chapter in a paragraph of great eloquence and power, in a number of beautiful inferences from a contemplation of the love of God, who spared not his own Son, but *delivered him up for us all.*” (Verses 31—39.)

2. The second section shows the equal privileges of Jewish

and Christian believers, by a complete refutation of the absurd doctrines of election which then obtained. The Jews of that day taught that the promise of God to Abraham secured to his seed, not only possession of Canaan, but the spiritual blessing of being his church and people. They even asserted that God was bound to fulfil these promises to every Jew, on the ground of his descent from Abraham, however wicked or faithless; and held that, if a prophet were inspired by God to predict evil to the Hebrews, he ought to resist the Divine will, and, like Moses, pray that his name might be blotted from the book of life. In opposition to these views, the apostle shows, that God's rejection of a great part of the seed of Abraham was an undeniable fact: (chap. ix. 6—13:) that God had not chosen the Jews to peculiar privilege on account of any goodness in them or their fathers: (verses 14—24:) that his acceptance of the Gentiles and rejection of many of the Jews had been predicted both by Isaiah and Hosea: (verses 25—33:) that God had offered the Jews and Gentiles salvation on the same terms, although the Jews rejected it: (chap. x. :) that though the Israelites were rejected for their obstinate unbelief, this was not extended to the whole race, there being a believing remnant among them: (chap. xi. 1—20:) nor would this rejection be perpetual, inasmuch as a time will come when all Israel will believe and be saved: (verses 21—31:) and that, in the mean time, these dispensations of grace displayed the Divine wisdom and love. (Verses 32—36.)

The third part contains the practical enforcement of these doctrines; the apostle exhorting those to whom he wrote, to dedicate themselves to God, and to live as members of the body of Christ: (chap. xii. 1—8:) to cultivate Christian love: (verses 9—21:) to obey the ruling authorities: (chap. xiii. 1—7:) to exercise mutual affection: (verses 8—14:) the manner in which those strong in faith should conduct themselves toward those who are weak. (Chap. xiv., xv. 1—12.)

The fourth part is the conclusion of the Epistle. (Chap. xv. 13—xvi.)

The FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS will next in order engage our attention. The church in this city was planted by Paul, he having ministered one year and six months there, between the years A.D. 51 and 53. The Corinthian Christians were partly Hebrews, but principally converted Gentiles. When Paul left Corinth he was followed by Apollos: Aquila and Sosthenes were also ministers of eminence to this



people. It seems that soon after Paul had departed, the peace of this Christian society was greatly disturbed by the efforts of false teachers, who, boasting of their eloquence, wisdom, and knowledge of Christian liberty, greatly undermined the credit and influence of the apostle. The effect of this was to create two parties in the Corinthian church, the Hebrews claiming to follow Apollos, and the Gentiles Paul; the former contending earnestly for the observance of all Jewish ordinances, the latter frequently eating animal food which had been parts of the victims offered in sacrifice to idols, (which the Jewish converts condemned,) and in some instances indulging in licentious practices, one of the members of the church having actually married his step-mother. In other respects great disorders had been introduced; and the apostle wrote this letter for the purpose of calling back his children in the gospel to truth and propriety. The scope and design of the apostle were in precise accordance with the necessities of the case: to remedy existing disorders, and to give answers to the questions which had been sent to him. It accordingly consists of three parts, including the introduction and conclusion.

In the first part, or introduction, the apostle expresses his satisfaction at the good qualities and important gifts which he knew them to have received. (Chap. i. 1—9.)

The second part contains various important admonitions and doctrinal advices, which may be noticed in two sections.

1. The first consists mainly of reproofs on account of existing corruptions and abuses. The apostle opens this part with a condemnation of their divisions, and defends himself against the insidious misrepresentations which had been circulated against him: (chap. i. 10—31; iii., iv.): he then severely rebukes them for not putting away the incestuous person from their communion: (chap. v.): their covetous and litigious dispositions, which led them to prosecute each other in Heathen courts, is next condemned: (chap. vi. 1—9:) a strong and earnest protest follows against the sin of fornication, to which, in their carnal state, the Corinthians had been greatly addicted. (Verses 10—20.)

2. The second section contains replies to inquiries which the Corinthians had propounded to the apostle. This begins with advices concerning matrimony; showing that Christianity leaves men under the same civil obligations as they were subject to previously: (chap. vii.): the lawfulness of eating the flesh of animals offered to idols discussed: (chap. viii.—x.): Paul then gives directions as to occasional ministrations, and especially

regarding what was suitable as to the sexes: (chap. xi. 2—16 :) the irregularities practised in the celebration of the Lord's supper reprov'd: (verses 17—34 :) instructions respecting spiritual gifts: (chap. xii.—xiv. :) the certainty of a future resurrection is then convincingly set forth at length. (Chap. xv.)

The third part contains the conclusion, in which Paul gives directions respecting the contributions to be made for the poor disciples at Jerusalem, promises an early visit, and closes with various salutations. (Chap. xvi.)

The SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS was, as its title imports, sent to the same church: its design was to account for the apostle's not having visited them, as he had intimated his intention of doing, and to carry out his earnest desire for their spiritual improvement by adding such further admonitions and instruction as their case required. This Epistle consists of three parts.

The first part is a brief introduction. (Chap. i. 1, 2.)

The second contains the substance of the Epistle, which is given in a kind of apologetic discourse; in which he first defends himself from the imputations which had been evidently put forth to his disparagement by false teachers. He does this by uttering, in a simple and forceful manner, the feelings of his heart respecting his personal fortunes, purposes, feelings, and desires, especially during the interval between his First Epistle and the present, alluding to the account which he had received of them from Titus, and showing that he had not acted from worldly interest, but from a true love for them, and a deep concern for their spiritual welfare: (chap. i. 3—vii. :) the apostle then, digressing from his principal subject, exhorts them to make a liberal contribution for their poor brethren in Judea: (chap. viii., ix. :) resuming his apology, he further justifies himself, asserts his apostolic power and character, exposes the false apostles who had attempted to undermine his authority, and shows his own merits, not out of vain-glory, but for their good. (Chap. x.—xiii. 10.)

The third part is the conclusion. (Chap. xiii. 11—14.)

Scarcely anything can afford a finer exhibition of the true spiritual character of the gospel church than is seen in this Epistle. Here was a great injustice done to an apostle of Christ. How, in such circumstances, does he demean himself? Does he seek to counteract the influence of his detractors by making a rival party, or by canvassing for a majority of votes?

He did nothing of this kind. He insisted on his apostolic position and authority, and appealed to the proofs which they had witnessed of his divinely-given endowments. Full of this godly assurance, he does not quail before the power of his enemies, but boldly denounces them as ministers of Satan, and threatens them with terrible judgments; content to leave this protest to work its way on the conscience of the Corinthian church under the influence of the Holy Ghost. We are not minutely acquainted with the result; but we know that Paul visited Corinth afterward, and was the bearer of their benefactions to Jerusalem. (Rom. xv. 26; xvi. 22, 23.) There can, therefore, be little doubt that his appeal had its desired effect; for we hear no more of the false teacher; but when, a few years afterward, Clement wrote his epistle to the church, Paul's name and authority appears to have been deeply and universally revered by the Corinthian Christians.

The EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS was written to the descendants of a tribe of Gauls who had formerly invaded Greece, and ultimately settled in a large and wealthy province of Asia Minor. Christianity had first been preached to this people also by Paul himself; who appears to have visited them more than once before this letter was written, although it is considered as the first of the canonical epistles, when regarded in the order of time.

The churches of Galatia, like most others of that day, were composed of Jewish and Gentile converts. The great difference in their previous opinions, habits, and religious views was very likely to produce disunion and division, unless a deep sanctification of spirit was constantly realised and maintained. These elements of disorder, however, were not left to their own unaided energy. In Galatia, as in some other places, a Judaizing teacher had either been introduced, or had arisen, who had successfully exerted himself to subvert their faith. It seems that he had succeeded to a considerable extent, by representing Paul as inferior to the other apostles, especially Peter; asserting that he was not divinely called, but had merely received his vocation from man; and that the other apostles not only taught that Gentile converts should be circumcised and keep the law, but that Paul himself, on some occasions, allowed the same thing. The object of all this Judaizing was, that the Gentile converts might be induced to submit to the Mosaic law; and it was so successful, that some of the Galatian converts had actually submitted to circumcision. A knowledge of these things having



reached Paul, he wrote this Epistle. Its scope and design, accordingly, are to assert his apostolical character and authority, and the doctrine which he taught, and to confirm the Galatian churches in the faith of Christ. This Epistle contains the introduction, the discussion of the subject, and the conclusion.

The introduction. (Chap. i. 1—5.)

The discussion of the subject comprises four sections.

1. The first is a vindication of the writer's proper apostleship; in which he shows, by a series of facts, that he was not a missionary from Jerusalem, nor a disciple of the apostles, but that he had his commission immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ, and was consequently, as an apostle, not inferior even to Peter. (Chap. i. 6—24; ii.)

2. The apostle then goes on to show that justification is by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law; (chap. iii. 1—18;) that the design of the law is not to justify, but to convince of sin, and to restrain from the commission of it; thus being adapted to prepare the way for a better righteousness, by leading sinners to Christ, that, being justified by faith in him, they might obtain the benefit of the promise: (verses 19—24;) such being the end and object of the law, the apostle infers that under the gospel we are freed from its observance: (verses 25—29;) and illustrates his inference by the Divine treatment of the Hebrew church, which was placed under the law as a father puts a minor under a guardian. (Chap. iv. 1—7.)

3. The apostle then shows the great weakness and folly of the Galatians in subjecting themselves to the law, which they did by submitting to circumcision, when they, by the same means, forfeited the covenant of grace. (Chap. iv. 8—31; v. 1—9.)

4. He further urges various instructions and advices, especially on the right use of Christian freedom. (Chap. v. 10—26; vi. 1—10.)

The conclusion contains a brief summary of the argument, closing with the apostolical benediction.

Although the principal topic discussed in this Epistle is the same as that which is the prominent one in that written to the Romans, there is ample reason for the difference which is obvious in our author's treatment of it in these letters. Here Paul is arguing only with the Hebrews: his discussion of the matter is therefore narrowed. When writing to the Romans, he discusses at large the subject of justification in

reference to Jews and Gentiles; and consequently takes a much wider range of argument.

The EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS comes next in order. This church was also planted by the ministry of Paul. On his first visit, he preached there about three months. He returned, however, in the following year, and ministered with uncommon success; a numerous church was formed; malign arts were abandoned; and magical books to a great amount burned. During three years the apostle continued his ministry in this place; and again, when on his last visit to Jerusalem, he sent for the elders of Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, where he took an affectionate leave of them as one that should "see them no more."

The occasion which called forth this Epistle is the key to its scope and design. Paul, who was, at the time of writing this letter, a prisoner at Rome, seems to have felt some anxiety lest his being charged with pestilent conduct by the Jewish people would have an injurious effect on their minds; but whilst thus apprehensive, he was gladdened by the intelligence that his Ephesian converts stood firm in the faith. He accordingly wrote to establish them still further, by affording them more exalted views of the love of God, and the excellency of Christ, and to fortify their minds against the scandal of the cross.

This Epistle contains two parts.

The first is an exhibition of doctrine. After the salutation, (chap. i. 1, 2,) the apostle praises God for the whole range of gospel blessing, (verses 3—14,) with thanksgiving and intercessory prayer. (Verses 15—23; ii. 1—10.) He then gives a detailed contrast of their former condition as Heathens, with their present state as believers in Christ: (verses 11—22 :) and adds a prayer for their establishment. (Chap. iii.)

The second part is a practical exhortation, and contains a general admonition to walk worthy of their high calling, keeping the unity of the Spirit, and prizing his various gifts: (chap. iv. 1—16 :) and from the difference which the gospel of Christ has made in their condition, (verses 17—24,) he further exhorts them to avoid particular evils: (verses 25—31 :) with an injunction to opposite virtues: (chap. v. 1—21 :) an earnest commendation of relative duties: (chap. v. 22—vi. 9 :) an exhortation to war the spiritual warfare: (chap. vi. 10—20 :) the conclusion. (Verses 21—24.)

The **EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS** now claims our attention. Here, also, Paul was the spiritual father of those to whom he wrote. This church, hearing he was a prisoner at Rome, did as they had previously done on two former occasions,—they sent their minister Epaphroditus to him with a present, lest in his captivity he might be reduced to want. The apostle took advantage of the return of this minister to send by him this Epistle. His design in this communication appears to have been, 1. To confirm them in the faith; 2. To encourage them to walk worthy of the gospel of Christ; 3. To caution them against Judaizing teachers; and, 4. To testify his gratitude for their Christian kindness.

1. The apostle, after a short introduction, (chap. i. 1, 2,) gives utterance to expressions of thanksgiving to God for the steadfastness of their faith, and prays for its continuance; and, lest they should be discouraged on account of his imprisonment, he assures them that it had tended to the furtherance of the gospel. (Verses 3—20.) 2. He then exhorts them, in a strain of most noble eloquence, to maintain a deportment worthy of the gospel. This is urged by the example of Christ: (chap. i. 21—30; ii. 1—18:) after which he promises to send Timothy and Epaphroditus. (Verses 19—30.) 3. The apostle then proceeds to caution them against Judaizing teachers. (Chap. iii., iv. 1.) 4. Lastly, after some admonitions to particular persons, (chap. iv. 2, 3,) and some general exhortations, (verses 4—7,) he proceeds to recommend virtue in the most extensive sense, referring to all the grounds on which it was urged by the philosophers of Greece: (verses 8, 9:) and then gratefully acknowledges the benevolence of his friends, at the same time disclaiming all selfish, mercenary feelings, assuring them that he had learned the happy art of contentment: (verses 10—18:) after this, he encourages them to expect a yet more abundant supply from their heavenly Father; and, with salutations and a solemn benediction, closes the letter. (Verses 19—23.)

We have now to consider the **EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS**. It is not known when or by whom the gospel was first preached to this people. That which occasioned the writing of this Epistle was the circumstance that the Colossians had experienced some difficulties, which induced them to send Epaphras to seek advice and counsel on their behalf from the apostle, who was at that time a prisoner at Rome. About the same period he had also received a letter from the Laodiceans, who seem to have written to him respecting some



false teachers who had appeared among them. Paul, therefore, appears to have dealt with the whole case in this Epistle, perhaps on account of the similarity of the circumstances of the two churches ; and directs that the Colossians would hand their letter to the Laodicean church, and ask them for a copy of that which they had written to the apostle, that they might fully understand his reply.

There is a remarkable accordance between this Epistle and that written to the Ephesians ; so much so, indeed, that the Rev. T. H. Horne has given more than twenty passages which are identical in both letters. It will materially contribute to a correct understanding of these scriptures, to read them together, as in very many instances one will explain the other. The design of the apostle in this Epistle was evidently to show that all hope of man's redemption is centred in Christ, in whom alone is all fulness, perfection, and sufficiency ; to caution against Judaising errors on the one hand, and philosophical conceits on the other ; and to stimulate the Colossians to a temper and conduct worthy of their holy profession.

The Epistle consists, like most of Paul's letters, of two parts ; the one doctrinal, and the other practical.

After a short introduction, (chap. i. 1, 2,) the Epistle opens with expressions of joy at the favourable report which their faith had obtained, followed by an assurance that he daily prayed for their further prosperity. (Verses 3—14.) The dignity of Jesus in his creative acts, providential government, and as Head of the church, is then set forth. (Verses 15—20.) Paul then repeats his joy on their account ; and, under a consideration of the excellency and glory of Christ, declares the cheerfulness with which he suffered in his cause, and avers his earnest anxiety to fulfil his ministry in the most efficient manner. (Chap. i. 21—29 ; ii. 1—7.) The apostle thence proceeds to caution his readers against the vain philosophy and superstitious errors of the new teachers ; shows the superiority of Christ to angels, and warns Christians against worshipping them. He censures the observance of Jewish sabbaths and festivals, and dissuades from regarding these corrupt additions, and others which many were endeavouring to introduce. (Chap. ii. 8—23.) The apostle then passes on to enforce practically relative duties : (chap. iii. ; iv. 1—6 :) after which follows the conclusion, in which moral matters of personal and private interest are introduced. (Verses 7—18.)

The FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS now follows.

Christianity was introduced into this city by Paul, who formed a church here, composed of Hebrew and Gentile converts. Being obliged to fly from this scene of labour by violent persecution, he went to Berea, thence to Athens, and afterward to Corinth. Prevented by these journeys from returning to the Thessalonians, as he had intended, he wrote them this letter from Corinth; not from Athens, as the superscription states. The occasion of Paul's writing appears to have been the favourable account of the faith and practice of the Thessalonians which he had received from Timothy. He accordingly wrote to incite them to continued steadfastness, lest they should be turned out of the way by Jewish persecution, and to enjoin constant progress in holy conversation and practice.

In this Epistle occurs, 1. The inscription. (Chap. i. 1.) 2. The apostle offers thanksgiving for the grace which God had bestowed upon the Thessalonians, and reminds them of the manner in which they had received the gospel from his ministry. (Chap. i. 2—10; ii. 16.) 3. He declares his desire to see them, his concern for their welfare, and prayer for them. (Chap. ii. 17—20; iii.) 4. He exhorts them to increasing holiness, brotherly love, and industry. (Chap. iv. 1—12.) 5. Then follow exhortations against excessive grief, on account of those who had died in the faith; with admonitions as to the coming of Christ to judgment. (Chap. iv. 13—18; v. 11.) 6. The Epistle concludes with practical advices and instructions. (Chap. v. 12—28.)

The SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS was written soon after the First, and appears to have been principally called forth by their misapprehension of the meaning of a part of the preceding Epistle; they having formed an opinion, from the language which Paul had employed, that the second advent of Christ, and the end of the world, were about to take place in that age. The apostle, having been informed of this error, wrote to correct the false impression, and took the opportunity thus afforded him of enjoining the observance of other Christian duties.

This Epistle contains, 1. The inscription. (Chap. i. 1, 2.) 2. St. Paul's thanksgiving and prayer. (Verses 3—12.) 3. The correction of their error respecting the day of judgment and the man of sin. (Chap. ii.) 4. Then follow advices concerning prayer, with directions respecting the disorderly. (Chap. iii. 1—16.) 5. The conclusion. (Verses 17, 18.)

This short Epistle is marked by great sublimity of sentiment,

and excellence of spirit ; and is at present peculiarly important, on account of its clear predictive teaching respecting “the mystery of iniquity,” and “the man of sin,” which we see so abundantly verified in our day.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY is, next in order, presented to our notice. The devoted minister of Christ to whom this Epistle was addressed, is one of the most interesting of the triumphs of grace recorded in the New Testament. His father was a Greek, his mother a Jewess : the latter appears to have been a pious, exemplary woman, who, aided by *her* mother, fully initiated the youthful Timothy into an acquaintance with holy scripture ; so that, being in his youth converted to God, he was prepared in early life for a course of useful and devoted zeal. After being called to the ministry, Timothy frequently attended Paul in his journeys and labours. The date of this letter is doubtful ; the prevailing opinion placing it about A.D. 64. The occasion which called it forth is, however, more clearly ascertained. It appears that Timothy having been left in charge of the church at Ephesus, the apostle wrote this letter to aid him in the performance of his spiritual duties, and especially to guide him in the selection of suitable persons for holding office in the church, as well as to put him on his guard against the influence of false teachers.

This Epistle contains, 1. The introduction. (Chap. i. 1, 2.) 2. General instructions to Timothy how he is to conduct himself in the direction of the affairs of the church. (Verses 3—20.) 3. Particular directions concerning the manner of worship ; (chap. ii. ;) the qualifications which persons should possess before they are appointed to be bishops and deacons. (Chap. iii.) After foretelling the introduction of great errors, suitable advice is given as to his properly sustaining the ministerial character, and to the right discharge of the duties of his office. (Chap. iv,—v. 2.) 4. Trifling controversies and various evils reprov'd. (Chap. v. 3—25—vi. 19.) 5. The conclusion. (Verses 20, 21.)

The manner in which the apostle writes to this minister casts very important light on the true nature and responsibilities of the sacred office.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY was certainly written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome ; but whether during his first or second imprisonment has not been clearly ascertained, although there can be little doubt that it was the latter. The



immediate object of the apostle was to acquaint Timothy with what had befallen him, and to request that he would visit him before the ensuing winter. But the aged apostle, being uncertain whether his life would be so long spared, offers his young friend, in this letter, various advices, encouragements, and charges, for the faithful discharge of his Christian and ministerial duties.

This Epistle contains, 1. The inscription. (Chap. i. 1, 2.) 2. An exhortation to diligence, patience, and stability in sound doctrine, followed by an affecting prayer for Onesiphorus. (Verses 3—18.) After which, fortitude under afflictions and persecutions is strongly urged, that the pure gospel may be maintained and dispensed. (Chap. ii.) 3. Cautions against false teachers, and constancy and diligence in ministerial duty enjoined. (Chap. iii., iv. 1—8.) 4. The conclusion, in which Timothy is urged to visit the apostle, followed by various salutations. (Chap. iv. 9—22.)

The EPISTLE TO TITUS was written to the Christian minister whose name it bears. He is supposed to have been a native of Antioch in Syria; but was subsequently charged with the principal guidance of the churches in the island of Crete. It was to assist and direct him in the discharge of this important duty, that the apostle Paul sent him this letter. It consists of three parts: 1. The inscription. (Chap. i. 1—4.) 2. Then follow various instructions, concerning the appointment of elders and deacons, whose qualifications are specified; after which are given cautions as to selecting men for the sacred office. (Verses 5—16.) Titus is then exhorted to accommodate his discourses to the respective ages, sexes, and circumstances of his people, and to give the greatest weight to his words by his being an example of the truths which he taught: (chap. ii. :) he is then enjoined to inculcate obedience to the civil magistrate, and gentleness and meekness of behaviour: (chap. iii. 1—7 :) that he should enforce good works, avoid foolish questions, and shun heretics. (Verses 8—11.) 3. An invitation to Titus to meet the apostle at Nicopolis, followed by various other directions. (Verses 12—15.)

The EPISTLE TO PHILEMON is the shortest, and perhaps the most beautiful, of Paul's Epistles. The person to whom it was written appears to have resided at Colosse, and to have been a Christian of great worth, and a citizen of considerable respectability and station. We learn from this letter that

Onesimus had been a slave to Philemon, and had conducted himself very improperly toward his master, and at length had fled from him; but that, having attended the ministry of the apostle during the time that he was a prisoner at Rome, he was truly converted to the faith of Christ; after which he affectionately waited on the apostle. But Onesimus feeling that he ought to return to his master, and Paul being unwilling to detain him without the consent of Philemon, and both being aware that, in ordinary circumstances, Onesimus had exposed himself to punishment as a runaway slave, Paul wrote this letter to the injured master, requesting him to receive his penitent servant with kindness and affection.

The Epistle throughout is a beautiful exhibition of the finest address, the purest Christian principle, and the most respectful attention to the master, and affectionate concern for the servant. Scarcely any thing can exalt Paul higher as a truly cultivated and noble spirit than this short Epistle.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS is the last of those canonical letters ascribed to the apostle Paul. It has not, however, the name of the apostle, nor has it any introduction, in which it is addressed to some individual or body of Christians, like all the other of Paul's Epistles. The authorship of this portion of scripture has, consequently, been questioned in ancient and modern times. Indeed, scarcely any point pertaining to the literature of the Bible has been discussed with more profound research and critical inquiry than this; and the result, as summed up by one of the ablest writers on the subject, is given in these words: "1. There is no substantial evidence, external or internal, in favour of any claimant to the authorship of this Epistle except Paul. 2. There is nothing incompatible with the supposition that Paul was the author of it. 3. The preponderance of the internal, and all the direct external, evidence go to show that it was written by Paul."

The occasion of writing this Epistle, as well as its object and design, is sufficiently apparent from its contents. Whilst the violent enmity of the Jews to the cause of Christ was sustained by the existence of the temple, and the continuance of the Mosaic ordinances, they could use not only persecution, but also arguments, in favour of the pre-eminent obligation of the Old-Testament economy. They could urge that Moses, who gave the law to their fathers, was superior to Jesus, who died on the cross; that the worship instituted by their great legislator was splendid and worthy of Jehovah, whilst the Christians had no

priesthood, no temple, no altars, no victims, &c. ; and thus the wavering were turned out of the way, and even sincere and devoted disciples unsettled in their faith. The apostle met all this array of opposition by the clear, complete, and unanswerable book now before us. The following analysis of its contents will show the scope and convincing character of this important portion of holy writ.

This Epistle has been by different learned men divided into two or three parts, according to their taste ; but, in reality, it does not admit of any such division. The book contains one continuous argument ; the only ground of distinction being, that the former part is chiefly doctrinal, interspersed with practical exhortations ; while the latter is mainly practical, with many doctrinal allusions and statements, the transition-point being about chapter x. 19. The object of the Epistle is to show the superiority of the gospel of Christ over every preceding dispensation of grace, especially the Mosaic institutions.

The writer enters upon his task by showing forth the true divinity, and consequently the infinite superiority, of Christ, even to angels, by whom, indeed, he is worshipped. (Chap. i.) This is followed by the practical inference, that special attention and obedience should be given to the revelations of Him who is thus Divine : (chap. ii. 1—4 :) the argument for Christ's superiority is then resumed ; when it is shown that his dignity was not diminished by his temporary humiliation in human nature : (verses 5—9 :) but that, on the contrary, it was a proof of his Divinity, and the means of accomplishing man's redemption : (verses 10—18 :) the superiority of Christ to Moses is then shown, inasmuch as the first is Lord, and the second but a servant : (chap. iii. 1—6 :) this truth is then enforced on the believing Hebrews, who from hence are enjoined not to follow the practice of those who perished in the wilderness : (chap. iii. 7—iv. 13 :) the superiority of Christ to Aaron, and all other high priests, is then set forth, and illustrated by allusion to Melchizedek : (chap. iv. 14—viii. :) the apostle now enters on a new branch of the argument, by showing that the tabernacle, and all its consecrated furniture and ordinances, were merely typical, and could not supply intrinsic purity, or actual remission of sin ; a fact which was virtually acknowledged by their constant recurrence ; and that, consequently, the typical services were abolished by the perfect sacrifice of Christ : (chap. ix. 11—28 ; x. 18 :) the apostle thence exhorts to faith, prayer, and constancy ; enforcing his appeal by the fearful dangers of apostasy, and from the practical power



of faith, referring for this purpose in detail to the most eminent of the Old-Testament saints: (chap. x. 19—39; xi. :) thence follow exhortations to patience and diligence in Christian piety: (chap. xii. 1—13 :) to peace and holiness: (verses 14—17 :) to an obedient reception of the gospel, from the surpassing excellence of the dispensation, and the consequent danger of neglect: (verses 18—29 :) to brotherly love, and various other virtues: (chap. xiii. 1—19 :) after which follows the conclusion, containing a prayer for the Hebrews, and apostolical salutations. (Verses 20—25.)

There is no portion of revealed truth which contributes more to give a unity of teaching, purpose, and effect to the whole range of Divine truth, than the Epistle to the Hebrews. It presents the beneficent purpose of God in the redemption of man as the one great result of infinite wisdom, mercy, and love in all his dealings with mankind. As it could only have been written whilst the temple and Mosaic ordinances existed; so it perpetuates a clear view of their true character, and of the surpassing excellency of the gospel as the new and better covenant.

The Pauline Epistles are followed by seven others, which have obtained the epithet of "catholic;" a term which has called forth much inquiry and criticism. As, however, it is not found in the sacred text, I shall dismiss it with the single remark, that it should be taken as a general designation of those inspired apostolic letters which were not addressed to any individual or particular body of Christians, but to Christians generally.

The first of these is the EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES; that is, of James, the apostle who was commonly called "the less;" for the other James, the son of Zebedee, was put to death by Herod Agrippa before this letter was written.

The style and manner of this Epistle is, in almost every respect, unlike that of any other part of scripture. It seems to have been written without any plan; consists of disconnected sentences of general import; has no address at the beginning, or formal conclusion at the end; and makes but slender reference to Christ, and scarcely any to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. Yet, notwithstanding, it forms an important and very useful portion of holy writ. The design of the writer seems to have been to correct several errors and improper practices which had crept into the church, and to persuade the

Christians of that and of all other times to be patient under their tribulations, and faithful to their calling.

It contains, 1. Exhortations to joyful patience ; (chap. i. 2—4 ; ) to seek wisdom in prayer ; (verses 5—8 ; ) to humility ; (verses 9—11 ; ) to constancy under trial ; (verses 12—18 ; ) to receive with meekness, and reduce to practice, the word of God. (Verses 19—27.) 2. It censures and condemns undue respect to wealth and station in religious assemblies ; (chap. ii. 1—9 ; ) shows that a breach of any one command is a violation of the whole law ; (verses 10—12 ; ) exhibits the worthlessness of that dead faith, which does not work by love and issue in righteousness ; and shows that a living faith producing works is absolutely necessary to final justification. (Verses 13—26.) The affectation of being teachers reproved. (Chap. iii. 1, 2.) The fatal effects of an unbridled tongue, (verses 3—12,) contrasted with heavenly wisdom ; (verses 13—18 ; ) carnal indulgence condemned ; (chap. iv. 1—5 ; ) and the proud, who are exhorted to repent ; (verses 6—10 ; ) also censoriousness ; (verses 11—17 ; ) and those who trust in riches. (Chap. v. 1—6.) 3. Exhortations and cautions to patience and meekness ; (verses 7—11 ; ) against swearing ; (verses 12, 13 ; ) on visiting the sick, and the efficacy of prayer ; (verses 14—18 ; ) encouragement to attempt the conversion of sinners. (Verses 19, 20.)

The FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER is the production of him whose name it bears, and was evidently written by the apostle of the circumcision to the converted Hebrews, who were scattered abroad after the persecutions of Jerusalem, and exposed to great privations and sufferings.

It contains, 1. The introduction. (Chap. i. 1, 2.) 2. An exhortation to steadfastness in the faith, even under affliction and persecutions ; this being the way to attain great and peculiar blessings. (Chap. i. 3—25 ; ii. 10.) 3. The apostle exhorts to a holy life, and the conscientious discharge of the duties of citizens to governors, servants to their masters, husbands to their wives. (Chap. ii. 11—25 ; iii. 13.) 4. He further exhorts to patience, submission, and holiness, by considering the example of Christ, (chap. iii. 14—18,) the punishment of the old world, (verses 19—22,) the sufferings of Christ, (chap. iv. 1—6 ; ) by the prospect of further trials : (verses 7—11 ; ) and that, under these considerations, even afflictions should be regarded as occasion of joy. (Verses 12—19.) 5. Directions to ministers and people, how to conduct themselves. (Chap. v. 1—11.) 6. The conclusion. (Verses 12—14.)

This letter is a noble and truly edifying portion of holy scripture, bearing on every sentence the proof of a lofty, sanctified, and zealous spirit ; full of sense, purity, and power.

The SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER appears to have been written soon after the First, and with the same purpose and design.

It contains, 1. The introduction. (Chap. i. 1, 2.) 2. An earnest exhortation to progress in piety : (verses 3—11 :) motives for this exertion. (Chap. i. 12—21 ; ii.) 3. Cautions against the influence of scoffers, whose false opinions are refuted : (chap. iii. 1—7 :) and the opposite doctrines of truth asserted. (Verses 8—14.) 4. The conclusion, in which Peter declares his agreement in sentiment with Paul, and appends a summary of the Epistle. (Verses 17, 18.)

The FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN does not bear the name of any apostle ; yet, notwithstanding this omission, the origin and authenticity of this book have been all but universally admitted. It is, however, more difficult to ascertain to whom it was addressed, or for whose use it was written. Indeed, when examined, it does not present to us any evidence whatever of being an epistolary composition : it seems rather a didactic discourse on the principles of Christianity. The design of this treatise appears to be to guard Christians against doctrinal errors and improper practices ; to stir up all believers to a diligent and devoted pursuit of inward and outward holiness ; and to exhort them to closer spiritual communion with their living Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Although the sentences are beautifully simple and expressive, their connexion is not always apparent, nor the general scope of the writer easy to be discerned. The book, however, seems to contain seven sections : 1. An assertion of the true divinity and humanity of Christ, and the necessity of union with him. (Chap. i. 1—7.) 2. The universality of sin, and Christ's perfect propitiation : the nature of true faith, and its fruits. (Chap. i. 8—10 ; ii. 17.) 3. Jesus the same as Christ, in opposition to false teachers. (Chap. ii. 18—29.) 4. The privileges of true believers, their consequent happiness and duties, and the evidence by which they are shown to be "the sons of God." (Chap. iii.) 5. Marks by which to distinguish Antichrist and false Christians. (Chap. iv.) 6. The connexion between faith in Christ and its hallowed fruits. (Chap. v. 1—16.) 7. The conclusion. (Verses 17—21.)



This book can scarcely be dismissed without our observing, that the clauses constituting parts of verses 7, 8, of chapter v. have occasioned a controversy which has lasted for centuries, until at length a majority of the learned seem disposed to abandon the passage as being without authority and improperly inserted in the text. The omission of the disputed words would alter the text thus: Verse 7: "For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Verse 8: "And there are three that bear witness in earth,] the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." The words included in brackets are the disputed ones; and it will be seen that, when omitted, the passage makes a perfect sense. Whatever may be thought of this question, it must not be regarded as at all affecting the doctrine of the Trinity, which is fully taught in other parts of holy writ.

The **SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN** is but a brief summary of the contents of the first. It was addressed to a Christian matron, who is commended for her pious care of her children.

The **THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN** is also a short letter, written to a converted Gentile named Gaius: who he was, or where he lived, we are not informed; but his kind and hospitable temper is strongly marked in this Epistle. (Verses 5—8.)

The contents of these short books do not call for analysis, or other further observation.

The **EPISTLE OF JUDE**, Judas, Thaddeus, or Lebbeus, as he was indifferently called, is also a short but important portion of scripture. It opens with an address and apostolical benediction: (verses 1, 2:) after which follow the reasons which led Jude to write to excite Christians to contend for the true faith; to beware of false teachers, lest, falling away, they should be destroyed like backsliding Israel, the fallen angels, and Sodom. (Verses 3—7.) Mention is then made of false teachers: (verse 8:) of Michael: (verse 9:) further allusion to the false teachers, with illustrations: (verses 10, 11:) and their fearful condition: (verses 12, 13:) how Enoch spoke of such persons in his day: (verses 14—16:) we should bear in mind apostolic advice: (verses 17—19:) how the church should treat such: (verses 22, 23:) farewell and doxology. (Verses 24, 25.)

We have thus passed in review another portion of the New-

Testament scriptures ; namely, the doctrinal or epistolary. And here the careful student will not fail to perceive that this mode of communicating the great substance of the gospel, displays an equal manifestation of wisdom and mercy. Here we have nothing abstract. Among professing Christians the doctrines of the gospel are too generally discussed in this manner. It has pleased the great Head of the church, however, to reveal them to us in a thoroughly practical and experimental form. Here you will perceive we have scarcely a single proposition laid down merely as such ; but, on the contrary, the most profound truths, even the deep things of God, are brought out as the result of the Holy Spirit's operation in faithful and devoted hearts.

From this interesting portion of holy writ we pass on to the consideration of another equally so—the prophetic portion of the New Testament. In applying this term to the REVELATION, we must not be supposed to intimate that the Gospels and Epistles do not contain numerous and remarkable prophecies. In this respect the New Testament resembles the Old : many important predictions are found in the preceding portions of both, while the book of Revelation in the New, like the books of the prophets in the Old Testament, is mainly charged with the communication of the prophecies pertaining to the Christian dispensation.

It has been already intimated that this book is the production of the apostle John. This must not, however, be regarded as an unquestioned fact. On the contrary, it has been doubted, both in ancient and modern times ; but a most careful and extended examination of the subject, by the ablest divines, has resulted in the full confirmation of the general opinion, that the book was written by John the apostle.

The time when this book was written has also been keenly disputed ; but a careful examination has led to the general opinion, that John was really banished to Patmos by the Emperor Domitian, and that the Book of Revelation was written either at Patmos in the last year of that tyrant's reign, A.D. 96, or at Ephesus in the following year.

The scope, interpretation, and contents of this book, however, form the principal topics of inquiry. And it is a happy circumstance that on the first point, at least, we have divinely-revealed information in the book itself. "Write," said the Son of man, whose glorious appearance is so fully described, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which

are, and the things which shall be hereafter." (Chap. i. 19.) So that these wonderful revelations were made, in the first place, to inform the apostle concerning the things which then existed in places distant from his own locality; to acquaint John in Patmos with the spiritual condition, temptation, trial, and danger of the churches to whom he had ministered in Asia Minor; and by this means to afford to the universal church a living representation of the manner and extent of that scrutiny which the great Head of the church always takes of the circumstances and conduct of his people on earth. In this detailed portraiture of the Asiatic churches we have some most important information. But this was not the whole purpose of the Spirit in the production of this book. It was also designed to make known "the things which shall be hereafter."

It may serve to show the difficulties with which those have to grapple, who set themselves to ascertain the true import of holy scripture, for their own benefit and the edification of the church, to state, that, while some writers suppose the seven churches here to refer to bodies of Jews to be formed after the resurrection, and consequently the whole book to be predictive of events to take place at a period yet extremely remote, even about the end of time; others have very gravely and ingeniously described the whole as a dramatic piece, or poem, in three acts, with a prologue and epilogue. But, not to dwell on such trifling, if not profane, speculations, we observe that we have seen no scheme of interpretation which fully commends itself to our judgment. That which comes nearest to what we regard as sound and sensible is supplied by Dr. Samuel Davidson,\* although to this in its details we should feel disposed to take some serious exception.

The contents of this book comprise two principal divisions or parts.

In the first part, after the title, (chap. i. 1—3,) follows the sublime description of the Saviour's appearance, with the symbols of his power, and the commission given to the apostle: (verses 9—20;) which is succeeded by the addresses to be sent to the seven churches of Asia: to Ephesus; (chap. ii. 1—7;) Smyrna; (verses 8—11;) Pergamos; (verses 12—17;) Thyatira; (verses 18—29;) Sardis; (chap. iii. 1—6;) Philadelphia; (verses 7—13;) Laodicea. (Verses 14—22.)

The second part contains the "things to be hereafter." John's vision of the Divine glory: (chap. iv., v. :) the opening

\* Introduction to the New Testament, vol. iii., p. 627.



of the six seals : (chap. vi. :) the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and the presentation of the multitude bearing palms : (chap. vii. :) the opening of the seventh seal, and the six trumpets, and the prophetic commission to John : (chap. viii.—xi. 14 :) the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the vision of the woman persecuted by the dragon, and the wild beasts from the sea and from the land : (chap. xi. 15—19 ; xiii. :) the vision of the Lamb and of the one hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Zion : proclamations and warnings : (chap. xiv. :) the seven vials and the episode of the harlot of Babylon and her fall : (chap. xv.—xix. 10 :) the grand conflict, the millennium, the conflict renewed, the judgment, the new creation : (chap. xix. 11—21 ; xx. :) the new Jerusalem described : (chap. xxi.—xxii. 5 :) the conclusion. (Verses 6—21.)

What these prophetic portions may import, we dare not guess, and think the labour that has been employed on the subject has done but little good, while it has certainly produced no small amount of confusion and mischief. At all events, it seems clear that we have not here, as is generally supposed, any series of chronological predictions, but rather a number of symbolical prophecies, which, when verified by their fulfilment, will gloriously exhibit the wisdom and mercy of God toward his church.

Our review of the books of holy scripture is now completed ; and we shall next turn our attention to the great body of doctrinal truth which they contain.

## LECTURE VI.

### THE BEING, ATTRIBUTES, AND TRIUNE PERSONALITY OF GOD, AS REVEALED IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

**THE** Result of previous Inquiry—Essential Importance of knowing God—Grandeur and Magnitude of the Subject—Mode of proceeding adopted—**GOD THE CREATOR OF THE WORLD, AND OF MAN**—Man made in the Image of God, Import of the Phrase—Expressive Names given to Deity—Spirituality of God—**THE DIVINE UNITY**—Practical Importance of the Doctrine—Other Divine Attributes—**ETERNITY**—Experimental Application of the Doctrine as a Foundation for our Faith—**OMNIPOTENCE**—Its Results—**OMNIPRESENCE**—Its true Import—**OMNISCIENCE**—**THE DIVINE IMMUTABILITY**—Vast Grandeur of these Revelations as Matter of intellectual Importance—Still more so in respect of Faith and Experience—Inquiries into the moral Character of God—**HE IS HOLY**—And his Law is similar in Character—This Attribute principally manifested to Mankind under two Aspects—Justice, in respect of Government—And Truth, in respect of Revelation—**THE DIVINE GOODNESS**—Explanation and Illustrations of this Attribute, which is manifested to Mankind in Pity, Compassion, Mercy, Long-suffering—**THE WRATH OF GOD** arising from the Aggressions of Sin on his Holiness—**TRIUNE PERSONALITY OF GOD**—Cautionary and explanatory Observations—Peculiar Anomaly of Language employed by Moses in speaking of Deity—The same found in the Language of the Patriarchs—The Case explained—**PERSONALITY OF THE FATHER**—**PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE SON**—He is the Word of God, and the visible Jehovah of the Old Testament—His Divine Titles—Attributes—Actions—The Object of Worship—The Divine Sonship—**PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE HOLY GHOST**—CONCLUSION.

HAVING proceeded thus far on our way, my dear brethren, I have now to enter upon a new section of our work, and to direct your minds to a different and most momentous branch of inquiry. Hitherto, we have found ample evidence that the Bible contains an authorised revelation of the Divine will for the instruction of mankind. Impressed with the importance of acquiring a particular acquaintance with every part of this sacred record, we have gone over in succession every portion of the Old and New Testaments, and ascertained at least the most important elements of the information attainable respecting the authors, occasion, design, peculiarities, and contents, of all the several books of which the Bible is composed; and, having completed this inquiry, it now becomes our duty to

return to these sacred pages, and carefully to study them, that we may learn what are the great truths which they bear, for the instruction and salvation of mankind.

It will be instantly obvious that, in such an attempt, selection and classification are indispensable. While there is no other book which contains such important truths as the Bible, it is equally certain that there is no other book which contains truth of such multifarious and varied kinds. If, therefore, our object were to glean information of interest, or generally to increase our knowledge of men and things, there is no source to which I should recommend you with equal confidence to go, as to the pages of holy scripture. But, my brethren, our object is not only infinitely greater, but is, at the same time, of a more specific kind. We want to know those great truths which are revealed to us by God in his word, as the appointed means of raising and guiding the mind of man into the favour of his Maker, and union with his Spirit. In entering upon this inquiry, it will immediately be perceived, that it is necessary for us to know something precise and definite respecting the nature, character, and will of God concerning man. We have already seen,\* that, apart from the word of God, we have no means of acquiring this knowledge; that, in fact, the most wise, energetic, and polished of those nations who have lived without access to a Divine revelation have never in any instance succeeded in acquiring this information. We have therefore to avail ourselves, diligently, prayerfully, and perseveringly, of our privilege; and to read the sacred oracles, in order that we may obtain, as far as possible, this, the most desirable and essential of all knowledge,—the knowledge of God. In this effort our labour will be crowned with success: the Bible does contain an explicit revelation of the Being, Attributes, and Triune Personality of God.

To this, then, as the primary and most glorious circle of biblical knowledge, the most elevating and most useful class of revealed truths, let me, on this occasion, direct your attention. I shall endeavour to do this, by retracing as closely as possible the course which I have more than once pursued for my own individual edification.

But we must not underrate the difficulties and magnitude of this undertaking. If I were to propose to speak to you of the most wonderful erections which architectural science and skill ever reared on our earth; to describe the most gorgeous wealth, magnificence, and glory of royal palaces; to detail the

\* Lecture I., page 34.



profound and intricate calculations by which our mathematical astronomers have evoked the hidden laws of material being, and spread them as illustrious discoveries before our eyes ; or to exhibit the still more subtle processes of reasoning thought, by which Locke and his followers have pursued their inquiries into the deepest recesses of the human mind ;—if I were to attempt to discourse on any one of these subjects, you would readily conclude that I had selected something quite beyond my powers, and that I must, in consequence, fail to convey any intelligible notion of it to your mind. And yet I have now to introduce one, to which all the splendour, intelligence, and profundity of other subjects stand in the same distant relation as nothing does to infinity. Under a deep conviction, therefore, that I cannot *adequately* discuss this subject, I am consoled by the persuasion that the effort is necessary. Yes ; we must know God. For our own individual instruction and salvation, this, to some extent, is necessary ; and for the successful prosecution of our work as preachers, it is equally essential. Although, therefore, we do not hope fully to sound the fathomless depths of Divine existence, we will pursue our way, assured that every ray of scriptural light, every element of this knowledge, will impart unto our minds substantial benefit and blessing. Well might the ancient sage ask the man who attempted to investigate the attributes of the Divine Being by the unaided light of nature, “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven ; what canst thou do? deeper than hell ; what canst thou know?” (Job xi. 7, 8.) But we who live under the gospel dispensation, “more favoured than the saints of old,” are assured, on the highest authority, that this supernatural knowledge is the gift of Christ : “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John xvii. 3.)

In the brief discussion of this great subject, I venture to depart from the beaten path generally pursued by theological writers. They either consider the Divine attributes in connexion with proofs *a posteriori* from the works of creation, or as arranged in systematic and abstract propositions from the text of scripture. Now, although I may occasionally refer to both these methods of proof and illustration, it will be my principal design to study the Divine Nature and Attributes as revealed to us in their practical and experimental bearing on personal religion.

In proceeding with this inquiry, I propose, in the first instance, to consider the information afforded by holy scripture on the subject of **THE BEING OR EXISTENCE OF GOD.**

Much stress has been often placed on the alleged fact, that the Bible assumes, but never asserts, the Divine existence. The grave and important subject which we have to investigate will not permit us to descend to the hair-splitting process of arguing on the nice inflexions of mere terms. We take the first sentence of the Bible, and read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and then ask, Does not this text assert the existence of God? Does it not carry back the mind to a period anterior to the being of all material things, and there and then place before it God in his glorious solitude, ineffable and alone? Surely the fact, that these words afford the additional information that this Divine Being "created the heavens and the earth," does in no respect detract from their virtual assertion of the Divine existence. On the contrary, they tell us of the being of God in a manner which immediately associates him with man, with his condition and destiny.

The Bible does, indeed, speak of the existence of God. But it is to inform us that he made the heavens which shine above us, the earth on which we tread; that the glorious sun was made by him; that the moon and stars are the results of his wisdom and power; that all nature in its wide range of utility and beauty, all existence in its vast diversity and extent, are the workmanship of our Maker, and bear every where the impress of his goodness in their adaptation to our necessity and gratification.

But this is a small part of the communication which this sacred record brings to us for our instruction and consolation. We are further told that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. i. 27.) If this truth had now been authoritatively ascertained for the first time, it would stand out as the most astonishing philosophical fact ever announced to the ears of mankind. Nor is it less grand in its depth and compass of truth because it has shone forth from the page of inspiration for more than three thousand years. Man is made in the image of God. What does this import? We are told that it refers to moral resemblance,—righteousness and holiness. Doubtless these are included as being essential attributes of the Divine Mind; but certainly these are not the whole of what we are to understand by "the image of God." The possession of

this image and likeness was that to which man was destined by his Maker, that he might be equal to the high position for which he was created. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Verse 26.) Man, be it observed, is a creature composed of a compounded nature: an earthly body, curiously and wonderfully formed; and an immaterial and immortal spirit; and these combined into one living being called "man." This being was made in the likeness and image of God: by which we understand, not merely that he was created in holiness; that he thus in some measure resembled God; and that he was invested with those high powers and elevated qualities of mind which prepared him to be the head, the ruler, over this world and all creatures, exercising dominion over it and them, subordinate only to God: but rather, that, in the very constitution of his mind, his intellect and heart, in his knowing, thinking, and feeling powers, he was made after the model of the Divine Mind; so that we are essentially his image and likeness in our original nature and capacities, and are, therefore, wonderfully adapted to hold intercourse with our Maker, and with him to enjoy fellowship for ever.

God, therefore, in all the height of his uncreated glory, in some sort, thinks and feels like man. It is this similarity of the human creature to his Divine Creator which, in all probability, made the incarnation possible, and opened a way for the accomplishment of the redeeming purpose of Heaven, by making man the "habitation of God through the Spirit."

Nor are we to overlook the direct revelation of God contained in the future history of the world. He gave the first pair a law, and punished them for its infraction. He saw the hearts of Cain and Abel, as well as their sacrifices. He heard the cry of Abel's blood, and called the murderer to account for his sin. He marked the piety of Enoch, and doomed the old world to ruin in consequence of the universal prevalence of sin. In fact, the whole range of revelation is an exhibition of God.

The Divine existence is further strikingly set forth in holy Scripture by the numerous expressive names which are applied to the Lord. He is called,—

**JEHOVAH**, "the self-existent."

**ELOHIM**, "Gods," or "Adorable Persons."

**EL**, "the Strong," or "Mighty."



SHADDAI, "Almighty," or "Self-Sufficient."

ELION, "the Most High."

EL-SABAOTH, "God of Hosts."

EHIEH, "I am," "I will be," "Independent."

ROCHUM, "the Merciful Being."

CHANUN, "the Gracious One."

ERECH-APAYIM, "Long-suffering;" the Being who, because of his tenderness, is not irritated, but suffers long, and is kind.

RAB, "the Great" or "Mighty One."

CHESED, "the Bountiful Being," he who is exuberant in beneficence.

EMETH, "the Truth," or "the True One."

To these we may add that most comprehensive and elaborate name which he announced for himself thus: "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." (Exod. xxxiv. 6.)

We must not omit here the explicit information which the word of God supplies respecting the profound and mysterious subject, the substance of God. "What is God?" was the inquiry frequently put to the Heathen sages of old; but it was never answered. The human mind never fathomed that bottomless depth, until it pleased the Lord to reveal himself so far to his intelligent creatures as words can convey to their minds a knowledge of spiritual things. We are accordingly supplied with an answer to this question. Does the inquiring mind of man now iterate, "What is God?" the holy book replies, "God is a Spirit;" and to show that this wonderful revelation of the Divine Nature is made, not to gratify man's curiosity, but to guide his mind into profitable intercourse with his Maker, he is told, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24.)

We pause here for a moment. Our attention is turned to the book of Divine truth, that we may learn, in all humility of mind, something of the Great Cause of all being,—the Lord God Almighty. We read these inspired pages, and learn that he is a Spirit; that, unlike all we see, and feel, and touch, his existence is spiritual, immaterial, incorporeal; that he was self-existent and all-sufficient, before all worlds; that his Divine Wisdom planned all those orbs which are comprised in the system of universal nature, and which were built up into being and stability by the word of his power; and that this infinite Spirit made us, and formed our thinking

and feeling powers on the model of his own mind, and thus prepared us for intercourse and fellowship with himself. Here is wisdom. These elements of truth give us indeed very limited, but perfectly sound, ideas of Divine existence. We know that God is, and, in part at least, what he is; and are prepared, from a stable starting-point, to pursue our inquiries; and, surely, no investigation can by possibility possess greater interest and importance than this. For if it be recognised as an undoubted truth, that there is a God, who is a pure Spirit, the Creator of the world and of man, and with whom our race is, from the very constitution of our nature, brought into contact, we are all most intensely concerned to know his perfections, attributes, and character.

We have reason to be thankful that, on these subjects, holy scripture affords the most abundant information. On directing our attention to these sacred records, we are first informed of the DIVINE UNITY. This is asserted in a manner so peculiar and emphatic, that it has been called God's first truth. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. vi. 4.) "The Lord he is God; there is none else beside him." (Chap. iv. 35.) "Thou art God alone." (Psa'm lxxxvi. 10.) "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." (1 Cor. viii. 4.) When the vital importance of this truth is urged, it is vain for men to say, that this doctrine can be demonstrated by reason. Frequently and easily have some Christian philosophers thus demonstrated the existence of God. But who ever did this, unless he had previously had access to the all-important disclosures of Divine revelation? The same remark applies to the doctrine of the Divine unity. It may be easily proved by men who have studied the holy Bible; but no one ever elicited this truth to any practical purpose, while deprived of this great privilege. The vast consequence of this doctrine is seen in the passage which we have first quoted. The Lord was about to announce the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. But upon what basis could this command rest, if it were uncertain whether there was one God or more? If the Divine unity were uncertain, obedience to the law might be impracticable. If it did not exist, obedience might be improper. The law is therefore placed on its proper ground, by standing in immediate connexion with this authoritative assertion, that there is but one God. Here we see the reason for the law and its sanction. The Deity chal-

lenges our supreme affection. He is entitled to it; for he has no equal, and, consequently, no legitimate rival. Disobedience to this law, therefore, is not merely a sin: it is idolatry. It is placing something, as a rival of God, on the throne which he has erected in our heart, and claimed for himself alone.

We proceed from the unity to consider the ETERNITY of God. His glorious existence never began to be, and will never cease to be. "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Psalm xc. 2.) "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." (Psalm cii. 25—27.)

Other passages might be cited; but they are unnecessary after the above. We see, in the first of these, what, from the poverty of language, we are compelled to call, the two boundless sections of duration spread before us, as the inheritance of Him who "inhabiteth eternity." "From everlasting," from the illimitable duration which has already passed, the God, who never began to be, has reigned in glory; and shall reign "to everlasting," to the never-ending duration yet to come; and throughout all this infinite range of existence which never begun and can never end, He is God,—infinite in all perfection and glory. In the citation from Psalm cii. we have the Divine eternity placed in striking contrast with the duration of all created things. The foundations of the earth,—its earliest and oldest framework,—even the heavens, were made by Him who was before all things. And they all shall wear out like a garment, be folded up, and laid aside; but he remains unaged by years, incapable of decay; from everlasting to everlasting, God for ever and ever.

Let me call your attention here to the vast difference in the effect which these sublime truths produce on the mind, when regarded as mere abstract elements of knowledge, from that which results from them when received as the foundation of faith. When we endeavour to realise this infinity of duration as an idea, to apprehend the unoriginated, never-ending existence of God as a fact, the mind sinks confounded beneath the effort: "it is too high, we cannot attain unto it." Yet, when, as a revealed truth, it comes associated with the word of his promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" (Heb. xiii. 5;) "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory;" (Psalm lxxiii. 24;) "And God



shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away ;" (Rev. xxi. 4 ;) "So shall we ever be with the Lord ;" (1 Thess. iv. 17 ;)—then the eternity of the Lord, the unfailing, never-ending existence of Him in whom is our hope, becomes the most solid foundation for our confidence : so that the Divine truth which confounds the carnal intellect, becomes the clear, intelligible, and undoubted foundation for our faith and hope.

The Bible also reveals God as INFINITE IN POWER. "God hath spoken once ; twice have I heard this ; that power belongeth unto God." (Psalm lxii. 11.) "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh : is there any thing too hard for me ?" (Jer. xxxii. 27.) "With God all things are possible." (Matt. xix. 26.) "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. xix. 6.) The Almighty power of God is a subject of the utmost moment, as a portion of revealed truth. It solves every difficulty which is presented to us in the wide range of the universal creation. It is vain for science to present unnumbered worlds to our vision, or to dive into the depths of remotest space to find wonders of existence, as obstacles to our faith ; for, adoringly extending our recognition to them all, we triumphantly ask, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord ?" The Christian's mind feels more than an intellectual interest in the marvels of material existence ; for the language of his heart is, "My Father made them all." Nor is this infinity of Divine power to be overlooked, as connected with the great redeeming purpose of God. How frequently is the power, as well as the malice, of our spiritual adversaries, so vividly and painfully present to the mind, that the stoutest heart quails, the firmest nerve falters, and the troubled spirit ejaculates, "I shall fall one day by the hand of my enemies !" You, my brethren, who are called to minister the truth of God for the salvation of men, will often have to console the feeble-minded, and to encourage the harassed and tried among the people of God with the assurance, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27.) "Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might he

increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah xl. 28—31.)

OMNIPRESENCE is also declared to be an attribute of the Lord. "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." (Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.) "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." (Psalm cxxxix. 7—10.)

We must not mistake the glorious attribute thus distinctly revealed, as being no more than a mere possible ubiquity, a power of being in two or more places at the same time. No; this doctrine of the Bible is properly set forth by the term "omnipresence," all or universal presence. The Lord has undoubtedly the power to make a special revelation of himself at any or every place, in any given moment. But these scriptures teach, that it is as natural for God to be every where as it is for man to be somewhere. So that we truly live and move in the immediate presence of Him who "fillet all in all." (Eph. i. 23.)

OMNISCIENCE, also, is an attribute of the Lord, according to the express declaration of his word. As God is every where present, and infinite in power, so does he possess all knowledge; and this, it must be remembered, applies as fully to all duration as to all space. He inhabiteth eternity as really as he fills heaven and earth. The beauty and force of language employed to make this revelation of the Divine glory, are worthy of close attention.

"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." (Psalm cxlvii. 5.) "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Acts xv. 18.) "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?.....he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" (Psalm xciv. 9, 10.) "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

(Prov. xv. 3.) "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." (Psalm cxxxix. 11, 12.) "Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?" (Prov. xv. 11.) "For thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." (1 Kings viii. 39.) "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man." (Psalm xciv. 11.) "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." (1 Sam. ii. 3.) "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." (Psalm cxxxix. 4.)

In addition to these glorious perfections, we are taught that God is IMMUTABLE, or unchangeable. "With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James i. 17.) "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." (Psalm xxxiii. 11.) "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19.) "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations." (Psalm cxix. 89, 90.) "For I am the Lord, I change not." (Mal. iii. 6.)

With submissive reverence we may ask, Where is there a subject for research and investigation equal to this? Do you admire intellectual grandeur and power? then search after the knowledge of God. Do the loftiest manifestations of wisdom, the most profound treasures of knowledge, fascinate and allure you? then draw near to the fountain whence all wisdom and knowledge spring. We cannot, indeed, know God to perfection. We might as reasonably labour to obtain a point from whence at once to survey all the surface of a globe. He is indeed "as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." (Job xi. 8, 9.) "There is no searching of his understanding." (Isai. xl. 28.) Yet we may know a part of his ways; since the weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God wiser than men.

But if these attributes of Deity invite to a higher measure of knowledge, how do they address our faith? We, who would shun atheism as a plague, and fly from an atheist as a pest; we, who would not hold converse with "the fool" who says,



either in his heart or with his tongue, "There is no God;"—to what extent do we realise, in our recognition of Divine law, our reliance on the promises of grace, our relation to him as servants and sons, in these truthful and sublime ideas of his nature? Is it this view of Deity under which we live? Can we read the sacred oracles with this impression of the character of their Divine Author? This is our privilege; and to the same extent in which we succeed in doing this, we shall obtain additional light, instruction, benefit, and blessing.

But, glorious as are these features of the Divine Mind, when we carefully consider the subject, we find they fail to present to the awakened spirit of man a satisfactory view of God. Here, indeed, we have an eternal, all-knowing, all-pervading, immutable Spirit, invested with infinite power and wisdom. We are brought into contact with this unsearchable One. He made us; and in Him we live, and move, and have our being. How, then, does he regard the works of his hands? What is his character? As he knows all things, exists every where, with power to work out his own will, what is that will? Does he delight in goodness or in vengeance? Wherever religion is recognised, there can no question be propounded of deeper interest to the well-being of man, than that which respects the moral character of the Deity. On this subject, accordingly, we find the teaching of holy scripture full and precise.

In the first instance, then, in respect of this branch of our inquiry, we learn that God is essentially HOLY. This term, in its application to the Supreme, signifies perfectly pure, immaculate. "I the Lord your God am holy." (Lev. xix. 2.) "There is none holy as the Lord." (1 Sam. ii. 2.) "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" (1 Sam. vi. 20.) "I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." (Isai. xliii. 15.) And this was the ascription of the living cherubim to the Divine Majesty: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isai. vi. 3.) "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy." (1 Peter i. 15.) "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." (Psalm cxlv. 17.) This being the character of God, his law, which is a transcript of his mind, is of the same kind. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Rom. vii. 12.) And this essential holiness is, consequently, made the foundation of his government, and placed in a prominent position as affecting his dealings with mankind. "Who shall not fear thee,

O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy." (Rev. xv. 4.)

The holiness of the Lord, however, although clearly revealed, and constantly set forth in the Bible, is not an attribute on which, in its own simple and abstract purity, the mind of man is able to form the most vivid and correct ideas. It is probably, to some extent, on this account, that this Divine attribute is exhibited in operation toward mankind in two great branches,—justice and truth.

Justice, in its principle, is holiness. It is frequently throughout the scriptures represented by the term "righteousness;" and is, in fact, the Divine holiness in one particular aspect of its manifestation in the Lord's dealings with mankind. We have, consequently, numerous representations of this quality in the holy scriptures. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." (Psalm lxxxix. 14.) "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." (Psalm cxix. 137.) "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." (Psalm cxlv. 17.) "A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." (Deut. xxxii. 4.) As justice is the manifestation of the Divine holiness toward mankind in respect of government; so is truth a display of this attribute in the communications of the Lord toward our race. The government of God, and the requirements of man, alike rendered some communication of the Divine will to the human race necessary; and this, in all its variety, is a display of pure and perfect truth. We, accordingly, find numerous passages of holy writ speaking very plainly and forcibly on this characteristic of the Divine manifestations to mankind. "For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth." (Psalm xxxiii. 4.) "For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds." (Psalm cviii. 4.) "The truth of the Lord endureth for ever." (Psalm cxvii. 2.) "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." (Rom. iii. 4.) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." (Titus i. 2.) "He abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." (2 Tim. ii. 13.) "How long, O Lord, holy and true?" (Rev. vi. 10.) "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True." (Chap. xix. 11.)

We have to add to these another attribute of no less intrinsic glory as respects the Divine character, and of equal interest to his intelligent creatures,—the GOODNESS of God.

By this term we do not mean to speak of the quality which the phrase in its application to human character is frequently employed to express; namely, virtue or purity. This, as pertaining to God, has been already considered under its scriptural designation "holiness." By "goodness," then, we mean, not rectitude, but the infinite benevolence of the Divine Mind; "or," as an eminent author has observed, "a disposition to communicate happiness. From an inward principle of goodwill, God exerts his omnipotence in diffusing happiness through the universe, in all fitting proportion, according to the different capacities with which he has endowed his creatures, and according to the direction of the most perfect wisdom." To this attribute we constantly find allusions in holy writ. "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good." (1 Chron. xvi. 34.) "Good and upright is the Lord." (Psalm xxv. 8.) "The goodness of God endureth continually." (Psalm lii. 1.) "For thou, Lord, art good." (Psalm lxxxvi. 5.) "The Lord is good to all." (Psalm cxlv. 9.) "There is none good but one, that is, God." (Mark x. 18.) The wonderful adaptation of all the material creation to minister to the circumstances and wants of man, our own curious and wonderful conformation, and the wide range of his providential government, afford so many glorious illustrations of the goodness of God towards his creatures.

This Divine disposition to do good to mankind is not a casual or incidental feeling, but essential goodness of nature. It is goodness that rises to the full extent of man's requirement: it is efficient and inexhaustible. And, what is yet more interesting and astonishing, when man is found to be ruined by sin and exposed to death eternal, then the Divine goodness (if I may venture to use such language) rises to a powerful and ruling affection, absorbing even the mind of Deity; and hence we read that "God is love," having "so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

It is the goodness of God, therefore, which is manifested to man in the Divine pity, compassion, mercy, and long-suffering, of which we have such touching descriptions in the sacred books. For that infinite benevolence which is represented generally in the scriptures by the term "goodness," and which induced God to provide such ample and wide range of enjoyment for man in his primitive state, followed him when he fell into sin and danger, and varied its aspects of loving-kindness, according



to the changing need and peril of the transgressor. We have, consequently, the manifestations of the Divine benevolence to our race, frequently described as pity, mercy, and long-suffering, "In his love and in his pity he redeemed them." (Isai. lxiii. 9.) "Then will the Lord pity his people." (Joel ii. 18.) "Ye have seen that the Lord is very pitiful." (James v. 11.) "For the Lord thy God is a merciful God; he will not forsake thee." (Deut. iv. 31.) "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy." (Psalm lxii. 12.) "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever." (Psalm cvii. 1; cxviii. 1; cxxxvi. 1.) "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." (Lam. iii. 22.) "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses." (Dan. ix. 9.) "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." (Exod. xxxiv. 6.) "But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity." (Psalm lxxviii. 38.) "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. ii. 4.) "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." (2 Peter iii. 15.)

Before passing from this part of the subject it may be necessary to observe, that, as the manifestation of the Divine goodness to sinners presents it to our view as pity, compassion, mercy, long-suffering, &c.; so aggressions on the Divine holiness by infractions of justice, or by the resistance to truth, call forth the wrath of God, and provoke his vengeance. "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." (Psalm vii. 11.) "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel." (1 Kings xi. 9.) "Because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel; therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people." (Isai. v. 24, 25.) "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence." (Deut. xxxii. 35.) "For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries." (Jer. xlv. 10.)

We have thus, as far as our limits allow, furnished an outline of the prominent elements of information given in holy scripture respecting the natural and moral attributes of God. He is thus presented to our view, not only as possessing every excellence in supreme perfection, but is described as exercising all these infinite powers for the benefit and blessing of man-

kind. "He delighteth in mercy." We must not, however, close our inquiry into the revelations of the Bible concerning the Divine Being at this point; for, wonderful as are the communications we have already considered, yet more glorious and profound depths remain to be carefully and reverently surveyed. For holy scripture not only instructs us in the existence of an infinite and eternal Deity, possessing these lofty attributes and powers; it also clearly indicates that there is a Trinity of persons in this one God.

On this subject I would speak with becoming diffidence and caution. It is confessedly full of mystery. There is, however, one point which is sufficiently clear. The manner or mode of the Divine existence is not to be ascertained by our research. No intellectual effort of the wisest man can possibly ascertain what is possible or impossible in respect of the Deity. We can know just as much of God as he has been pleased to reveal in his word, and no more. It is alike our duty and privilege to apprehend this amount of knowledge: we cannot add to it by any of our reasonings, or speculations. "To the law and to the testimony" we must appeal, and that with humble, prayerful, and teachable spirits. If we keep to this, we may be preserved from all unprofitable bewilderment, even whilst discussing subjects associated with the most profound mysteries; inasmuch as the truth revealed is always plain matter of fact, and consequently separable, by the lowest capacity, from the means by which this fact is produced, or the mode by which it exists. As this point is of some consequence, I may be permitted to explain my meaning by a familiar scriptural illustration. I direct attention to the miraculous passage of the Jordan by the Israelites, under the direction of Joshua. We are told on that occasion "that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap," (Joshua iii. 16,) so that the bed of the river was left dry for the people to pass over. Now this fact is revealed; and a believer in the verity of holy writ has to receive and to believe it. But the giving full credence to it has nothing whatever to do with the instrumental agency by which this wonder was effected. Whether on that occasion the laws of gravity ceased to act, or the water was deprived of its fluidity, and became for the time a coagulated mass, or whether the phenomenon was produced by any other means, we know not, and need not know, in order to believe that the miracle was actually wrought, as it is narrated by the sacred writer.

In like manner, if the Bible does clearly teach that



there exists a plurality of persons in the one glorious and eternal God, we may be fully justified in giving attention to these revelations in proportion to the grandeur of the subject, and the wonderful character of the communication ; but as the mystery of the manner or mode in which these personalities exist in one God, makes no part of the matter revealed, it is not exhibited as an object of faith. The fact here, as in the former case, is to be believed, apart from any mystery in which the manner of its accomplishment may be involved. The question, therefore, is neither, whether we can make this subject clear by reasoning efforts, or illustrate it by earthly analogies ; but, What is the precise teaching of the Bible respecting this most important matter ?

In order to bring this subject under your consideration in the most explicit and intelligible manner, it will be necessary, in the first instance, to call your attention to a class of texts which, speaking of Divine operations, do so by using a plural term as a designation for the Deity, and a singular one as descriptive of his action. As this is a very important part of the inquiry, I will express myself as plainly as possible. You are, I presume, all aware that, in speaking and writing, singular nouns require singular verbs, and plural nouns plural verbs. For instance : speaking of one person, you might say, "He *walks* to town." But speaking of more than one, you would say, "They *walk* to town." "They *walks*," or "He *walk*," would be alike contrary to all propriety. Now, if we take the Bible, we find, in its initial verse, what, at first sight, appears to be a violation of this simple and universal rule. "In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth." In this passage the Hebrew word, (*Elohim*), which in our version is translated "God," is plural, and means strictly and properly "Gods ;" while the Hebrew word (*bara*) which is rendered "created" is singular. In a case like this, it first occurs to us to inquire whether this anomaly arises from a misprint, erroneous transcription, or is occasioned by any habit or idiosyncrasy of the author. A brief examination is sufficient to show that neither of these suggestions will account for the strange appearance which has been noticed. It cannot be occasioned by an error in printing or transcribing ; for it uniformly occurs throughout the first three chapters of Genesis, where it is found above fifty times. Nor can it be attributed to any peculiar habit or practice of Moses ; for he usually observes the rule of not only making his nouns and verbs agree in number, but even the singular of this term *Elohim*, namely, *Eloah*, is used by him as



a Divine appellation more than once; whilst the plural *Elohim* is frequently used with plural verbs and adjectives.

It is of still more importance to show that this practice of using a plural term when speaking of God, was not confined to Moses. In the speech of Abraham to the king of Gerar, in which he says, "When God caused me to wander," (Gen. xx. 13,) the original *Elohim* stands for God. And when Jacob spake of the appearance of God to him at Bethel, he used the same plural term. (Gen. xxxv. 7.) These facts are sufficient to prove that this peculiar form of language is employed for some specific purpose, and to indicate, as far as the construction of forms of speech can do it, the doctrine of holy writ respecting the person of the Divine Nature.

If it be asked, "How can this be effected by what is confessedly false grammar?" I reply, It does not follow that what would be deserving of this appellation, provided such forms of speech were applied to men, are so when employed to speak of God. Our language is devised and arranged in perfect adaptation to the circumstances, wants, and relations of men. If, therefore, it be employed to speak of those phases of Divine existence, to which nothing human can bear any analogy, the only proper way to meet the case may be to adapt the terms to the sense to be expressed, although in doing so there may be a violation of those conventional laws which usually apply to the arrangement of words. I will explain my meaning by referring to the case in hand. The inspired writer had to record certain Divine operations. Presuming, then, that in the one Divine Being there exists a plurality of persons, he would necessarily have to use a plural term to indicate such plurality, while, these persons being in such intimate and mysterious union that they made but one God, there could be but the action of one; and consequently a singular verb was with perfect propriety employed. The noun charged to record, as a fact, the presence and operation of a plurality of persons, was properly plural, and the verb being equally limited to represent but one action, was, for this reason, singular; and hence this apparent anomaly of language conveys to us a great truth.

That this is the case, we have abundant evidence in other parts of holy scripture. The fact is indeed distinctly asserted, "Jehovah our *Elohim* is one Jehovah;" (Deut. vi. 4;) or, as it is rendered in our version, "The Lord our God is one Lord:" where the unity of the Deity is asserted by the term "Jehovah" in the singular, and the plurality of persons by the name *Elohim* being plural.

But this plurality of persons in the Divine Nature is also taught by other forms of speech. We read, "The word of the Lord came unto Abram, saying." (Gen. xv. 1.) It is not a word spoken that is heard by Abram, but a personal Word which came to him speaking: "*The Word came, saying.*" Again: "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." (Gen. xix. 24.) Here two persons are invested with the incommunicable name Jehovah; the one acting on earth, the other in heaven. Passages of this import might be multiplied; but this is not necessary. We shall more effectually elicit the required amount of information within the smallest compass, by now directing our attention to the doctrines which holy scripture contains, respecting the three persons severally existing in the Godhead.

Little need be said concerning the First Person. He is simply termed Jehovah, or God, and is seldom spoken of in respect of his personality, except in connexion with, or in contradistinction from, the Son or the Holy Spirit. The First Person is, however, spoken of in the Old Testament as the invisible Jehovah, and in the New as the Father. We are told, "No man hath seen God at any time." (John i. 18.) "Not that any man hath seen the Father." (Chap. vi. 46.) We have, consequently, no clear and undoubted instance in which the Father is made visible to man. One peculiarity of this Divine Person is, that ministerial acts are never attributed to him: the other two persons are constantly spoken of as ministerial agents, but not the first. When the visible and acting Jehovah rained fire and brimstone on Sodom, the Father was the Jehovah in heaven from whom it came. It was the Father who said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;" (Psalm xlv. 6;) and he is "the Lord" who, in the words of David, "said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." (Psalm cx. 1.) We know, from New-Testament authority, to whom these words were addressed, and that God the Father was the speaker. The evidence which the new-covenant scriptures give to the personality of the Father is still more explicit and abundant: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." (John iii. 16.) "Baptizing them in the name of the Father," &c. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) "The glory as of the only begotten of the Father." (John i. 14.) Passages of this kind might be multiplied to a great extent. But this is not the point to which objection is currently made; it being generally directed against the Divinity and Personality of the

Second and Third Persons. Special attention will therefore be given to these points.

The Son, however, is shown to be a distinct Person in the Divine Trinity, by numerous texts of holy scripture. It is worthy of observation on this subject, that, in the earliest portions of the Bible, and where we find plural appellations so frequently given to Deity, we also find mention made of one person possessing Divine powers, yet peculiarly manifested to mankind, and frequently in human form. Immediately after the fall, we read, "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden." (Gen. iii. 8.) You will note here, that it was not the sound of language which was heard, but the sound of *walking*. Our first parents seem to have known the footstep of this Divine Person: they heard his walking, were afraid, and hid themselves. He was therefore no stranger to them. It is also worthy of observation, that the Jerusalem Targum, which exhibits the doctrines of the ancient Jews, gives the beginning of the verse following that which has just been quoted, in this sense: "The Word of the Lord called unto Adam:" so that they held the phrase, "Voice of the Lord," as equivalent to "Word of the Lord."

As we have already seen, "the Word of the Lord," and the visible "Jehovah," came to Abraham; the latter certainly under the appearance of a man: for he who partook of the patriarch's bread and flesh, butter and milk, is soon afterward addressed by him as "Jehovah," "the Judge of all the earth;" and in other terms implying absolute Divinity; such as, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. xviii. 14, 25.) So in the case of Jacob, he says of the man with whom he wrestled, "I have seen God face to face." (Gen. xxxii. 30.)

It was this Divine Person who manifested himself to Moses expressly as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" (Exod. iii. 6;) who led the Israelites out of Egypt, and guided them as their God, dwelling with them in the visible glory or Shekinah, over the cherubim in the holy place. In those manifestations he is, indeed, generally called "the angel of the Lord;" but then, as such, he constantly displays and exercises Divine attributes, and is addressed by Divine names. Hence, "The angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, I am the God of Bethel." (Gen. xxxi. 11, 13.) And when this "angel of the Lord" appeared to Moses in the bush, he was called God, and declared himself to be the great I AM; and when this Divine Person is seen in the full revelation of his glory in the inner sanctuary, he is not only called



Jehovah, (Isai. vi. 5,) but when this scene is referred to by the inspired apostle, he is identified with Christ: "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." (John xii. 41.) So when this glorious Shekinah is seen by Ezekiel on the throne over the living cherubim, he appears in the form of a man. (Ezek. i. 26; x.)

In the New Testament, however, we pass from visions, symbols, and obscurity, into the full vision of Divine truth; and have, accordingly, placed before us, in plain and simple terms, a clear and explicit revelation of the great truth which we have above endeavoured to trace out by a comparison of several portions of Old-Testament scripture. John expressly says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John i. 1, 14.) What can be clearer than this authoritative statement? Here we are informed that "the Word," of whom we read in the Mosaic writings, was in the beginning; that is, was before any of the creative acts of Deity had commenced. He was in the beginning, and was God, truly and essentially Divine. But, notwithstanding this, the Word was not the only Divine Personality so existing; for the Word was in the beginning with God. And, further, this Divine Word, which so existed, and by whom all things were made, was he who became incarnated as the only begotten Son of God. We see, therefore, in our Lord Jesus Christ, Him who had manifested his glory in Old-Testament times, and who appeared at length as the promised Seed of the woman, to destroy the works of the devil. As this is a most important subject, and nothing is of more consequence than that we should have clear and correct views of the scriptural character of the Second Person in the sacred Trinity, "the Word of God," I will condense what may be further necessary on this subject under the following heads: The titles given to Christ: the acts attributed to Christ: the Divine worship paid to Christ: the Sonship of Christ.

1. The titles given to Christ. These imply true and proper Divinity. The incommunicable name Jehovah is applied to Jesus. This is a title never given to a created being: "I am Jehovah: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another." (Isai. xlii. 8.) The prophecy respecting "the way of Jehovah," "the high way of our God," is distinctly applied to Christ by Matthew. (Isai. xl. 3; Matt. iii. 3.) Paul quotes, "Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be

delivered," (Joel ii. 32,) and applies it to Christ. (Rom. x. 13.) The term "Lord" has been shown to be the Greek word frequently used as equivalent to Jehovah, as it is in many instances: such as, "He is Lord of all." (Acts x. 36; Heb. i. 10; Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 16.) But when this word is used in a lower sense, it is frequently appended to another term, expressive of true Divinity; as in the passage, "Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God." (Luke i. 16.) "My Lord and my God." (John xx. 28.) Christ is also called God. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." (Heb. i. 8.) "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matt. i. 23.) "The Word was God." (John i. 1.) "The glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus ii. 13.) "Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." (Rom. ix. 5.) In addition to this we might mention, that Christ is also called "the Lord of glory;" (1 Cor. ii. 8;) "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" (Rev. xix. 16;) "King of Israel:" (John i. 49;) which proving, as it does, his pre-existence, is for this reason, and on the principle of the theocratic government of the Hebrews, equivalent to a Divine appellation, "the Son of God," (verse 49,) and "the Word." (Verse 1.)

It is freely admitted that critical ingenuity may cavil at some of these terms, and deny that they convey the idea of absolute Divinity; but I am bold to affirm that the application of all these titles to one person is quite sufficient to prove his Divinity. If not, indeed, the assertion of Divinity must be impossible; for we have here applied to Christ all the strongest terms which the scriptures contain, expressive of Divine attributes.

2. But attributes and actions which none but God himself could possess or perform, are also ascribed to Christ. The Child born is "the everlasting Father." (Isai. ix. 6.) Other passages also speak of his eternity. (Rev. i. 17, 18; ii. 8; xxii. 13.) Immutability is ascribed to him: (Heb. i. 10—12; xiii. 8;) omnipresence: (Matt. xxviii. 20; John iii. 12, 13;) omniscience. (John ii. 24; xxi. 17; Matt. xii. 25.) To him is ascribed the work of creation. (John i. 3; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 10.) He preserves and sustains all things. (Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3.) Christ pardons sin: (Mark ii. 5; Luke v. 20;) gives the Holy Spirit: (Luke xxiv. 49; John xvi. 7;) bestows spiritual blessings on mankind. (John xiv. 27; 2 Cor. i. 20.)

3. Christ is also set forth in the word of God as the true and proper object of worship. He was predicted as such.



(Psalm lxxii. 15, 17.) His worship is commanded. (John v. 23; Phil. ii. 10; Heb. i. 6.) He was worshipped on earth. (Matt. ii. 11; ix. 18; xv. 25; xx. 20, 21; xiv. 33; Luke xxiv. 52; Gal. i. 5.) He is worshipped in heaven. (Rev. v. 8—10, 12, 13; vii. 9, 10.)

4. We now proceed to notice the import of the Divine Sonship. Mysterious as this subject in its profoundest depths confessedly is, it is very important that clear and distinct views should be obtained as to what is actually revealed respecting it. A peculiar notion was held and, if not originated, reduced to a kind of system by Sabellius, an African bishop or presbyter, about A.D. 250 or 260. It was this: that, instead of there being Three Persons in the Godhead, the Trinity really referred to relations; and that the Son and Spirit were only virtues, functions, and emanations of Deity; that he who is in heaven is the Father of all things; that he descended into the virgin, became a child, and was born of her as a Son; and that, having accomplished the mystery of our redemption, He effused himself on the apostles in tongues of fire, and was then called the Holy Ghost. Now, this is not what is revealed in the Bible, but a false and mischievous perversion of it. The Sonship of Christ is real, as the plurality of persons in the Deity is an established fact.

Another and equally mistaken notion has been propounded in modern times, to the effect, that the term "Son of God" is in the scriptures applied to Christ only in respect of his human nature; and, consequently, the sonship commenced with the miraculous conception of the humanity of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin. The great talents and learning of the late Dr. Adam Clarke, some years ago, gave immense impetus to this opinion; but sounder views now generally obtain.

It would seem a sufficient antidote to the latter notion, to observe, that the terms "father" and "son," when used in any given case, must be used in the same sense. If a Christian is the instrument of a sinner's conversion, he may be called his spiritual "father," and the convert his "son in the gospel." But it would be strange indeed, if, because this person was for this reason called "son," that it should be insisted on, that the other was his natural father. If, then, Christ is called "the Son of God" only because of the miraculous creation of his human nature, then, of course, God can only be called Father on the ground of this miraculous creation. But no truth is more clearly stated than that this miraculous creation was not the work of the Father, but of the Holy Ghost. (Luke i. 35.)



It would seem sufficiently evident, from this alone, that the sonship of Christ did not merely respect his humanity, as it could not give the title of Father to the First Person.

Before quoting a few portions of scripture to show that the term "Son" refers to the Divine nature of the Redeemer, it may be observed, that the term "only-begotten" is used several times in respect of Christ; and if it applied to his human nature, it would not be correct; for the body of Adam was also immediately produced by Divine power, and is, consequently, called by Luke "the son of God." The term "only-begotten" must, therefore, have reference to the Divine nature of the Saviour. Observe another of these passages: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." (John iii. 16.) Was this unspeakable love displayed in the creation of the human body of Jesus, or in the humiliation and work of him who "thought it no robbery to be equal with God?" Surely, the latter. It was in this sense that he "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." (Rom. viii. 32.) Another decisive proof of the Divine sonship of Christ is found in these words: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 3, 4.) It will be seen at once that the resurrection could not declare the miraculous conception of Christ. Besides, we have here his human and Divine nature placed in opposition. According to the flesh, he was of the seed of David; but he was the Son of God as he was Divine, and consequently his remaining in the grave was impossible. Further conclusive proof is found, that this term respects his Divinity, in those texts which were occasioned by a desire to express supreme Divinity, without any reference to his humanity. The case of Nathanael is in point. Deeply impressed with a sense of the Saviour's omniscience, he said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." (John i. 49.) There is not here the slightest reason to believe that this man knew any thing of the miraculous conception of Christ; the presumption is entirely against it: the words evidently imply an ascription of Divinity. So, in the noble confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. xvi. 16.) So, in the exclamation of the centurion: "Truly this was the Son of God." (Matt. xxvii. 54.) It will only be necessary to add, that the death of Christ actually took place because of the universal and strong opinion of the Hebrews of that day, that

these words, "the Son of God," referred exclusively to absolute Divinity. The Jews did not expect that their Messiah would be Divine: hence their confusion when asked, "How, then, did David in the spirit call him Lord?" Accordingly, Jesus was frequently styled the "Messiah," and its equivalent, "the Son of David," without its calling forth any violent animosity. (Matt. ix. 27; xx. 30, 31; Mark x. 47, 48; Luke xviii. 38, 39; Matt. xv. 22; xxi. 9, 15.) We consequently find that when Christ, on being arraigned, was questioned as to his Messiahship, he refused to plead. The student must take his information on this important point from the ample narrative of Luke, as Matthew blends the two questions into one. They asked him, "Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am." (Luke xxii. 67, 70.) This acknowledgment was declared to be blasphemy, and he was condemned to die: proof positive that the term "Son of God" did not refer to the humanity, but to the proper Divinity, of Christ.

When learned men perplex their readers by asking, like Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" they simply mistake the province of reason in respect of revelation, as set forth in a preceding lecture.\* It is freely admitted that we know nothing of the manner of this mysterious relation, any more than we do of the inscrutable union of three persons in the Godhead; but we have the most abundant evidence throughout the Bible, that this Triune Deity exists, and that the first and second persons are constantly spoken of as Father and Son; and especially so where there is no reference to the human nature of Jesus; where the language seems exclusively to apply to Christ's essential Divinity: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 19.)

We close this part of our subject by a brief notice of the personality of the Holy Spirit. This inquiry will respect two simple propositions: that the Holy Spirit is a person, and that he is Divine. This personality is proved from a variety of texts, which have no meaning in any other sense: "God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost." (Acts x. 38.) "That ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xv. 13.) "To lie to the Holy Ghost." (Acts v. 3.) "We are his witnesses; and so is also the Holy Ghost." (Verse 32.) "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." (Chap.

vii. 51.) "The Holy Ghost said." (Chap. xiii. 2.) "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost." (Chap. xv. 28.) "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city." (Chap. xx. 23.) "Well spake the Holy Ghost." (Chap. xxviii. 25.) "As they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i. 21.) "As the Holy Ghost saith." (Heb. iii. 7.) "In the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." (1 Cor. ii. 13.) These, and numerous other passages which might be cited, cannot be understood as the personification of an attribute, but clearly refer to a person properly so called. And this is further manifest by the ascription of acts and feelings to this Divine Person: "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." (Mark xiii. 11.) "It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost." (Luke ii. 26.) "The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape." (Chap. iii. 22.) "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Gen. i. 2.) "The Spirit of God hath made me." (Job xxxiii. 4.) "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." (Gen. vi. 3.) "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." (Eph. iv. 30.) "Quench not the Spirit." (1 Thess. v. 19.)

But the Holy Ghost is not only a distinct person, he is truly God. Sin against him is called blasphemy. (Matt. xii. 31.) "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." (Acts v. 3, 4.) The Holy Ghost is called Lord. (2 Cor. iii. 17.) He is eternal. (Heb. ix. 14.) He is omnipresent. (1 Cor. vi. 19; Rom. viii. 14.) He is omniscient. (1 Cor. ii. 10.) He is the source of inspiration. (2 Peter i. 21; John xvi. 13.) He is the fountain of life. (John vi. 63.) He is united with the Father and the Son in the one God." (Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14.)

I have thus, my dear brethren, endeavoured to place before you a brief summary of the doctrines of the Bible respecting that most glorious and interesting of all subjects, the Divine being, attributes, and triune personality. Let me entreat you to fill up this outline by prayerful study and research. Do not indulge the mistaken notion, that we need no other teacher than our own experience in this matter. God hath revealed himself in our hearts, it is true, to give us Divine knowledge and salvation; but this is not to supersede the authoritative teaching which he has communicated in his holy word, but rather to prepare us to comprehend this teaching in all its fulness. Here our ransomed hearts may learn yet more fully to know Him who filleth all in all, whom to know is life eternal.



## LECTURE VII.

### THE TEACHING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE CONCERNING THE REDEEMING WORK OF CHRIST.

THE great Subject of the Bible, the Redemption of Mankind—This wrought by Jesus Christ—THE HUMILIATION OF THE SAVIOUR—Incarnation—Predicted in the Old Testament—Accomplishment recorded by the Evangelists, and evincing infinite Condescension—His RIGHTEOUSNESS—Its essential Importance—Universal Sinfulness of Mankind—The holy Life of Christ—Fully evinced in perfect Love to God and Man—The Law is thus honoured, and shown to be a pure, wise, and ennobling Rule of Life for Man—And Christ is shown to be the immaculate Lamb of God.—CHRIST OUR PROPHET, teaching Truth, and confirming it by Miracles—Manner of his Teaching—Subject-Matter of the Teaching of Christ—He expounded, explained, and developed—Principal Topics of Christ's Teaching—The Ministry of Christ confirmed by MIRACULOUS ACTIONS—The Nature and Object of the Miracles of Christ—Their great Number, and the length of Time during which they were performed—THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF CHRIST—Their true Character—How can Sin be pardoned consistently with the Divine Government?—Without Shedding of Blood is no Remission—Moral Fitness for the Investigation of this Subject—Promises and Predictions relating to the Death of Christ—Scriptures which refer to the Death of Christ as a Sacrifice for Sin, and as the procuring Cause of Blessing for Mankind—Vital Importance of giving Prominence to the Atonement—THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST important, predicted, and a Pledge of our Resurrection—THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST, the Triumph of his Passion, the Means through which the Holy Ghost is given—THE MEDIATORIAL REIGN OF CHRIST—Its happy Consequences to Mankind—Practical Observations.

HAVING in the last lecture considered the revelations of the Bible on the subject of the Divine existence, perfections, and threefold personality in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we proceed to mark the further developement of Divine truth in its exhibition of the redeeming work of Christ.

If, turning away the mind from the manifold, deeply interesting, and instructive, but at the same time minor, subjects brought forward in the pages of revealed truth, we carefully consider its whole scope, with a view to ascertain the great design which it exhibits,—the grand subject which is its burden and theme, the glorious object of all its vast magazine of truth, and almost infinite apparatus of wisdom, power, and mercy,—we find it to be THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND.

The attentive reader of holy scripture will find intimations

of this, introduced in the beginning, and, glowing in all its freshness and fulness, at the end, of the canon. Like a silver thread, it is interwoven with all the history and biography contained in the sacred pages ; as a line of light, it pervades the vast range of wonderful prophecy ; it is recognised as the ruling principle in the Divine administration towards men ; nations rise, flourish, and fall, to subserve this grand purpose ; and the redemption of mankind is the great end of the law, and of all the typical and ceremonial arrangements which were divinely appointed throughout succeeding ages. It is this, in fact, which forms the great object and end of God's revelation to man. All the miracles of his power, the manifestations of his wisdom, the wonders of his love, have been called into exercise to announce and effect the redemption of mankind. And this redemption was wrought out for our race by the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In directing your attention to this important subject, it will be desirable that we should consider the redeeming work of the Saviour as comprising his humiliation, righteousness, teaching and miracles ; his sufferings and death ; and his ascension, intercession, and reign.

The first element presented to our minds in proceeding to consider the HUMILIATION of our Redeemer, is the incarnation. This word literally signifies "to clothe with flesh," and is employed to exhibit that wondrous mystery in the process of redemption, by which the eternal Son of God really and permanently united his Divinity to human nature, so as to constitute this GOD-MAN—Jesus Christ—an efficient Redeemer for the human race. It must be admitted that this word "incarnation," like the term "Trinity," with some others which very accurately represent important scripture doctrines, is not found in the Bible : it has, however, its equivalents in many portions of scripture ; and the fact which it represents is abundantly taught in the New Testament.

It will be instantly perceived that this doctrine implies the pre-existence of the Divinity which was thus incarnated. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." (John i. 1.) We accordingly find the Word manifested to our first parents immediately after the fall. And if we may rely on the opinions of the ancient Jews, as stated in the last lecture, (namely, that the "voice of the Lord" which was heard walking in the garden was the Word of the Lord,) then we shall find that this Divine Person actually announced his future

incarnation to the first guilty pair, when, in his judgment on the serpent, he said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii. 15.) The attentive student of scripture will easily perceive, that, as the progressive revelation of the sacred oracles displayed the gracious presence of this Divine Word with the patriarchs and his Hebrew church, there were also revealed further and more distinct intimations of the incarnation.

It will be necessary to glance at a few of the most prominent of these prophetic intimations. The first we notice was given to Abraham in these words: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" (Gen. xxii. 18;) a passage which limited the expectation of universal blessedness to some individual descendant of Abraham. Afterward Jacob, in blessing his sons, declares, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come ; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix. 10.) Here the ruling dominion is promised to Judah, until the appearing of One by whom all people were to be governed. This text, therefore, turns attention to the time of the appearance of this Great One. Then, when Moses was delivering his valedictory addresses to the Israelites, he was commissioned of God to promise them, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth ; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. xviii. 18.) In this passage, the appearance of one from the Hebrew stock, endowed with Divine power to introduce a new covenant and spiritual economy, is plainly stated.

We now come to the revelations made to David, from which we select the following: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." (Psalm ii. 7, 8, 12.) In this passage we have, for the first time, the determined purpose of God, here called a "decree," announced for establishing the sovereignty of his Son, over the Heathen and the uttermost parts of the earth. We give another of these: "Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in: then a body hast thou prepared me. Burnt-offering and sin-offering thou desirest not: then I said, Behold, I come ! In the roll of the book it is written concerning me."



(Psalm xl. 6, 7, Dr. Pye Smith's translation.) We have here not a very obscure intimation of the incarnation; the Lord's dissatisfaction with merely animal sacrifice, the preparation of a body for him who came to do the will of God. The fulness of prophetic vision, however, made yet clearer revelations of this coming event. Hence we read, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel;" (Isai. vii. 14;) "which," says Matthew, applying this prophecy to Jesus Christ, "being interpreted is, God with us." (Matt. i. 23.) But this prophet is yet more explicit; and, in the prophetic anticipation of the incarnation, exultingly exclaims, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isai. ix. 6.)

Our limits will not allow further citation, although many important predictions yet remain unnoticed. These, however, will be sufficient to show that this wonderful event was clearly and fully foretold in Old-Testament scripture. And the reader should be reminded that, although we have confined our reference entirely to texts which speak of the incarnation, yet, in order fully to apprehend the teaching of holy scripture on this particular point, we must take these in connexion with numerous others which, while promising a great Deliverer and Redeemer, did not make reference to the incarnation; but, in their general effect on the Hebrew mind, all these would merge into one common influence, and produce an expectation of the Messiah.

In the fulness of time these predictions were verified: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (John i. 14.) This language must not be so rigidly interpreted, as to be supposed to teach that the Divine Nature was changed, but that it was so intimately and mysteriously united to humanity as to constitute the whole but one person. This incarnation is spoken of as a creative act. "The Word was *made* flesh." The same term is used in the original here, as is found in the third verse, where it is said, "All things were *made* by him." Human reason may therefore as well argue against the creation of the world because we cannot comprehend it, as against the incarnation of Christ. Both are placed by the inspired writer on the same footing, and both were accomplished by the infinite wisdom and power of God. This was the crowning act in the redeeming purpose of God. The Most High had

previously, in various ways, manifested himself to mankind ; but now all the types, promises, and prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled by the perfect union of the Divine and human natures in the person of Christ. So that in Christ there is one person ; and in this unity of person two natures, the Divine and the human ; and there is no change, or mixture, or confusion of these two natures, but each retains its own distinguishing properties. If any inquire, how it was possible, if Christ were truly God, for him to be born and die, to grow in wisdom and stature ; how he could be subject to law, be tempted, and stand in need of prayer ; how he could be forsaken of his Father, purchase the church with his own blood, and have a "joy set before him," and have all power in heaven and earth given to him ;—the answer is, that he was also man. While, on the other hand, if it occasion surprise that a visible man should heal diseases at his will, and without reference to any higher authority, as he often did, still the winds and the waves, know the thoughts of men's hearts, authoritatively forgive sins, be exalted to absolute dominion over every creature in heaven and earth, be associated with the Father in solemn ascriptions of glory and thanksgiving, and bear even the awful names of God ; the solution of the difficulty is found in the fact, that Christ is God as well as man.

But this incarnation is represented as an act of the greatest condescension and humiliation. "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 6—8.)

It is not possible for any language to exhibit a full and complete idea of the condescension and humiliation which the Son of God displayed in his incarnation and career in this world. But all that words can do seems to be accomplished by these portions of holy writ. Nothing can be more futile, and indeed pitiful, than the Socinian glosses which they have called forth. If words have any meaning, these texts must teach the dignity, exaltation, and glory of Christ in his pre-existent state. On earth he was never rich in possession of any thing with which he had previously parted ; his riches could not therefore have been possessed by him here. But he was rich in all the fulness of Divine glory. Yet he laid all this aside, and

descended, not only to take upon himself our humanity, but even to come down to such poverty as to say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matt. viii. 20.)

The second text just quoted expresses the same sense still more forcibly; and teaches most distinctly that Christ was equal with God: for the assumption of this glory involved no breach of justice or propriety. Yet, possessing this infinite dignity, he emptied himself, as the original phrase, which is rendered "made himself of no reputation," literally means. We cannot, of course, take this to teach that he ceased to be truly Divine. Being essential Deity, he could not cease to be so. Indeed, the text, while it speaks of intrinsic quality in the terms already quoted, does, in respect of its scope and object, mainly refer to appearance. For as Christ on earth appeared in the aspect and character of a servant, so he in his pre-existent glory appeared as God. And as if this transition was not enough, he not only emptied himself of glory, and came down to our humanity, but even then he humbled himself still more, "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Such humiliation as this can have no parallel. The depth of suffering, of ignominy, and shame, voluntarily and vicariously endured by the Redeemer, was such as no mere man could by any possibility approach; still less could the height of his Deity be known by any created being. These facts indicate the infinite condescension, the unmeasured humiliation, of the Son of God.

We have in the next instance to notice the RIGHTEOUSNESS of Christ, his perfect innocency of heart and life. This is of more consequence to the perfection of the scheme of gospel truth than is usually understood. In order to apprehend the essential importance of this perfect purity, it will be necessary for us to consider the uninterrupted and total collision which all human history exhibits as existing between the laws of God and the conduct of men. From the creation of our race, to the incarnation of Christ, the teeming multitudes of humanity had not presented one single individual who had fully and uniformly obeyed the Divine law. Superficial readers have indeed selected some individuals, whose characters they have held up as faultless. But this apparent purity may frequently result from our limited knowledge of such persons: it certainly never arises from intrinsic sinlessness. Isaiah has frequently



been adduced as one of the good men whose character is given in the scriptures, and who is never mentioned as having committed sin. Perhaps a fairer illustration could not be selected. We carefully read over all that is said respecting him, and we do not find throughout his whole life any charge of disobedience to Divine law. Yet when even this holy man was brought into the glorious presence of Jehovah, he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips:" and, accordingly, after the application of the atonement, he was told, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." (Isai. vi. 5, 7.) We find nothing of this kind throughout the life of our Redeemer, as will be apparent from the following brief examination of the subject.

It will be necessary, for our obtaining just views of this doctrine, to notice the two great principles of the moral law, —perfect love to God, sincere and unreserved love to man; and, taking these in all the depth of their meaning and the breadth of their obligation on human nature, we ask, How far, when regarded as subject to all these requirements, was Christ blameless?

Nor, in this inquiry, must the fact be concealed, that Jesus Christ did not live such a recluse and retired life as to render a perfect acquaintance with his character impossible, or even difficult. On the contrary, he moved, in the most extensive sense of the term, in public. As a public teacher, he was generally placed in connexion with the masses of mankind; and, when withdrawn from their observation, he was constantly with twelve men who were privy to all his actions and to all his pursuits: so that of no man that ever lived have we better means of obtaining the most ample information, than we have of the life and character of Jesus Christ.

But he not only moved in a public sphere, and was constantly subject to observation; he was also placed in circumstances the most likely to call the frailties and vices of human nature into action, if any such existed in his mind. Where, again, throughout the history of human nature, do we find a man led away into dreary solitude for a long period, of set purpose that he might "be tempted of the devil?" And yet, in this fearful conflict, although it was continued until the cravings of his exhausted system greatly aided the assaults of the malign adversary, Jesus Christ triumphantly vanquished the power of Satan. As the tempter successively assailed each avenue of the mind, the Son of God, setting an example to all his followers, replied in the language of holy scripture, which not

only repelled the assault, but also held forth overwhelming reasons for piety and devotedness to God. Besides these affecting scenes, our Saviour's life presented others calculated to test, in a remarkable degree, the purity of his principles, the immaculate holiness of his mind. See him, then, in seasons of the deepest sorrow, oppressed with superhuman woe. We speak of the agonizing pains of poverty, of the deep distress occasioned by want: who was ever so poor as Jesus? Yet, in all this, he is full of patience, contentment, resignation. Mark the extent to which he was watched, hated, persecuted, maligned, misrepresented; the object of envy, scorn, and bloody-minded malice. In all, he maintained perfect meekness, unblemished sanctity of life. Even in his atoning agony, amid the unspeakable gloom of Gethsemane, and the indescribable horrors of Calvary, he was led "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." (Isai. liii. 7.) With every innocent human feeling in the fullest intensity of action, he suffered, endured, obeyed, and with his last breath dispensed blessings on the wretched; and by his placid triumph over all the terrors of death, even whilst bending beneath its mortal agony, he elicited from an observant Heathen the wonderful exclamation, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matt. xxvii. 54.)

It remains for us to observe the clear and abundant proof supplied by holy scripture, that this pure and perfect character was formed under the ever-prevalent influence of the mighty twin-principles to which allusion has been made,—the love of God, and the love of man.

At the outset of his career, Jesus being of an age when mere humanity would scarcely dispose the mind to any serious engagement, his reply to the kind remonstrance of his mother was the pointed inquiry, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49.) So early was his supreme devotedness to God evinced in pious action, and asserted in emphatic terms! And this continued to be the ruling principle of his life, as he strongly asserted long afterwards: "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (John v. 30.) Nor was this simply shown in his life: it was demonstrated in his death. When entering on the hour of darkness, and beginning to bear the guilt of a ruined world, how earnestly did he iterate the language, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt;" and,

“He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” (Matt. xxvi. 39, 42.) What can display more clearly that intense love which is the cause of all real obedience, and which fully subjects the mind to the will of God, than this language and conduct?

Nor was the love of Jesus to mankind less distinctly marked in all his life. Behold his intercourse with those who crowded around his way, and to whom he ministered food when fainting with hunger! He miraculously healed the diseased, raised the dead, and cast out devils. In fact, his life was an uninterrupted display of the most kind and devoted love for men. But we have here proofs of affection that can be found nowhere else. We are told,—and the statement comes not only with Divine authority, but with the force of self-evident truth,—“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John xv. 13.) Yet the love of Christ to fallen man far exceeded this, the utmost force of natural affection; for, those for whom he devoted himself to humiliation, suffering, ignominy, and death, were not his friends: “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. v. 8.) So that his love transcends all that is fabled in poetry, or pictured in the most romantic conceptions of the imaginative; indeed, it is without a parallel in human nature: he supremely loved God, and most intensely loved and sympathized with man.

What, then, is the effect of this character, when regarded in respect of the laws which God has given to mankind? In the first aspect of this case, it clearly affords a perfect justification of the Divine law. It has been already observed, that all preceding experience went to show that the law was unsuited to the character and capacities of mankind. No individual had succeeded in fulfilling its requirements, all had violated its injunctions; so that, instead of having been practically a rule of life, it had been a minister of death; for by it was “the knowledge of sin.” (Rom. iii. 20.) “Where no law is, there is no transgression;” consequently, as “all have sinned,” “the law worketh wrath;” (Rom. iii. 23; iv. 15;) for, as the apostle says, “The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.” (Rom. vii. 10.) But when this law, in all its purity, spirituality, and power, is seen in the actions, character, and conversation of Jesus, we see its perfect adaptation to the circumstances and condition of humanity abundantly justified. In him all its demands were met, all its



injunctions obeyed; and that without the slightest deficiency or interruption.

But the holy life and unblamable character of Jesus did more than justify the Divine law in its adaptation to mankind,—they exhibited its truly holy, righteous, and ennobling character. Where can we find such a specimen of perfect purity, unblemished rectitude, and lofty nobility as that exhibited in the life of our Lord Jesus? How low, how pitifully low, are all the greatness of human prowess, and the elevation displayed by works of art and genius, when placed in comparison with the majesty displayed in the conduct of Jesus! What selfishness and frailty does all the righteousness of men evince, when tested by the unbending uprightness of him who rendered to all their dues, giving to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, and to God the things that were God's! The character of the best of men is found to be sinful and evil, in contrast with Him who was without guile, in whom there was no sin.

And whence did all this purity, rectitude, and nobility arise? What was its cause, and the reason for all the disparity between the character of Jesus and that of other men? It was all comprised in this one particular,—He obeyed, while they, more or less, disobey, the Divine law. He was what all human nature was intended to be, by the Divine Maker and Governor of man. We see around us humanity perverted and distorted in all the revolting aspects of wickedness through disobedience; but in him all the beauty, loveliness, and greatness which a perfect conformity to the law of God alone can inspire. Let us not, then, underrate the important instruction afforded to us in the exalted holiness of Jesus Christ. It justified, honoured, and magnified the law, proving it to be at once the sure guide to the happiness, holiness, and dignity of man.

Nor must it be forgotten, that this perfect conformity to the Divine law by Jesus Christ was essential to the adequate performance of his redeeming work. He came, indeed, principally and specially, to offer himself a vicarious sacrifice for the sin of the world. But in order to this, it was necessary that he should "know no sin;" (Gal. ii. 17; Heb. iv. 15;) but, as the Lamb of God, should be manifestly pure, and spotless, and without fault. This alone could demonstrate the vicarious character of his sacrifice, and lay a sure and certain foundation for the world's atonement. Such was Jesus. Exposed to the malicious scrutiny, the malignant watchfulness, of his bitterest enemies, he could meekly but triumphantly ask, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46.) He

needed not, therefore, any sacrifice for his own sin : (Heb. vii. 27 :) and thus he was manifested as the great High Priest of our profession, "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Verse 25.)

We have now to consider Christ as the PROPHEET of God to mankind, the great Teacher of saving truth to the world ; who also manifested his Divine power in miraculous actions for the confirmation of his truth, the benefit of man, and the manifestation of his own glory.

Here we must observe at once that, with a gentleness of manner, an unobtrusive meekness of spirit, which fully justified the prophetic announcement of his character in this respect ; (Isai. xlii. 2 ;) the Lord Jesus nevertheless asserted his true and proper dignity. The highest claim previously made by any of those inspired messengers who were appointed to communicate the will of God to mankind, was, "Thus saith the Lord." This was the avowal of their Divine calling and authority. We never hear language like this fall from the lips of Jesus. With an authority which nothing but conscious Divinity could give, he stood forth in his lowest humiliation as the fountain of truth, the seat and centre of Heaven's law to man ; and in this character he promulgated the most glorious revelations ever given to our race. "Verily, verily, *I say unto you*," was the sanction which was given, and which, indeed, was the highest that could be given, to his communications of grace and truth.

The Divinity of Christ, which accounts for the peculiarity just mentioned, is the cause of another distinguishing feature of our Redeemer's teaching. He never evinced any excitement, or seemed the subject of any external influence, even when announcing the most sublime and stupendous revelations. In this respect he was unlike all the prophets, and more especially the most favoured of them. Isaiah and Ezekiel, for instance, seem frequently overwhelmed with the weight of prophetic inspiration. Hence we find their actions vehement, their language violent, and their whole appearance clearly indicating that the spirit of the sacred seer could scarcely sustain the weight of heavenly influence and power which it had received, and was appointed to convey to the world. We see nothing of this kind in Christ. He was always calm in action, self-possessed, full of wisdom and truth ; always equal to his theme, and dealing with the deep things of God, and the unseen realities of heaven, like one who was fully conversant with their being and character, and familiar with their origin and end.

As Richard Watson, with equal truth and beauty, observes, "His form was that of a servant, his manner that of a God."

Remarking further on the manner of Christ's teaching, it will be necessary to observe, that he exercised his ministry under very peculiar circumstances. He taught a people, indeed, who were anxiously looking for the appearance of the long-promised Redeemer; but then their views respecting his nature, character, and manner of appearance, were so crude and distorted, that these expectations, instead of promoting the success of the Saviour's ministry, threw very great obstacles in his way. The moral and religious condition of the Jews, when Christ appeared among them, was also peculiar and unfavourable. They were very unspiritual and worldly in their general character, and extremely averse from all innovation in matters of faith. They were also the victims of a delusion respecting their collective and individual election as the people of God, and his children by virtue of the Abrahamic covenant, to which even the most extreme opinion propounded in Christian times can bear little comparison; at the same time, the several sects were violently inflamed against each other, and full of mutual rivalry and hatred. Yet, even in such circumstances, and to such a people, Jesus Christ so ministered the truth, that they were instructed, convinced, and many of them led to believe in his Messiahship. His parables, beautiful in their simplicity and powerful as communications of truth, reproved sin, and inculcated elevated principles of faith and morals in the most effective manner. "His disciples, after he had left them, and his voice no longer fell upon their ears, surely could not see the sun without being reminded that Christ is the light of the world; nor see a lamp placed upon its stand, without being warned not to hide their light under a measure; nor notice a sower going forth to sow, without being warned how they both sowed and received the word of God; nor observe weeds among the corn, but feel impressed with the separation of the false disciple from the true at the end of the world; nor consider the lilies of the field, without remembering the discourse of Christ on a particular providence; nor mark the silent growth of small seeds into great trees, without being encouraged as to the prevalence and success of their Divine religion; nor look upon a vine and its branches, without feeling their dependence upon their Lord for life, and growth, and fruitfulness; nor see an eastern shepherd leading his flock, without thinking of the good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep, leads them forth to pasture, knows them by



name, makes himself known to them by his voice, gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom, suffers them not to perish, but gives to them eternal life. And though to enter fully into the force and beauty of some of these images, we must recollect the climate and customs of the east ; yet they are, for the most part, perfectly intelligible in all places : and many others which are found in his discourses are quite as forcible in one country as in another. Living water, or running streams, are every where emblems of the perennial supply of the Spirit ; the bread that perisheth reminds us of that which endureth unto everlasting life ; the breaking of morning, of the dayspring from on high ; the interruption of labour by darkness, of the night in which no man can work ; the afflicted poor, of Lazarus ; pampered opulence, of him who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and who from neglect of his salvation lifted up his eyes in hell ; and alarms of sudden death are felt to be the voice of Him who bade us watch, because he might come in such an hour as we should not think of. I might multiply the instances ; but nothing is more obvious than that all creation, and even the common events of life, have been made the echoes of his own eternal truth ; and rendered vocal for our instruction in spiritual things." \* In a word, the teaching of Jesus might well be characterised by saying, "Never man spake like this man." (John vii. 46.) It was indeed a perfect model of speaking the truth in love.

But, leaving the manner of the Saviour's ministry, we direct attention to its substance. It will not be necessary here to sketch in detail a summary of the doctrines taught by Jesus during his ministry : it will sufficiently indicate its scope to inform you, that it was a spiritual expansion and developement of those truths which had been previously communicated in the pages of the Old Testament. Yet, in saying this, it must not be supposed that we underrate the vast importance of the teaching of the Son of God. On the contrary, it is scarcely possible to over-estimate the quality and amount of instruction which he conveyed, even when he seemed only to iterate communications with which his hearers had been long familiar as portions of Old-Testament scripture. We may instance his reply to the question respecting the great commandment of the law. (Matt. xxii. 36—40 ; Mark xii. 28—31.) This first commandment had long been known to his hearers, as a part of one of the most earnest addresses which the Hebrew legislator delivered to his people, not long before he was removed from them. (Deut.

\* Watson's Works, vol. vi. pp. 201, 202.

vi. 5.) With the second command they were equally familiar, as it stood imbedded in the promulgation of the ritual law, which they so carefully studied, and which was given them from the highest authority. (Lev. xix. 18.) Yet, although both these were fully known and recognised as Divine commands, what a flood of light the Saviour's allusion casts through them on the wide range of scripture morals, and on the purity, spirituality, and genius of all revealed religion! It is true that he takes these commandments out of the ordinary category of Divine laws, and makes them the spirit and substance of all religious requirement respecting man. And, by doing this, he gives a commentary on the sacred code, of infinite value and importance; and places the essence of the will of God concerning us in that which is simple, spiritual, pure, and infinitely reasonable.

Take another instance of the Saviour's teaching. It is said of him that he "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. i. 10.) But how did he accomplish this? To a great extent, at least, by bringing out of those sacred records which they all read, and which all professed fully to believe, statements which contained truth of the utmost importance and glory, but which was unperceived by the carnal reason of man, and had been allowed to lie latent for many centuries. The Hebrews for sixteen hundred years had read the words uttered by the Shekinah of God from the bush to Moses, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" (Exod. iii. 6;) but they had not discerned the weighty truth which these words recognised and preserved. Who would see, in a passage like this, a clear and authoritative record of the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, and the consequent resurrection of the body? Yet nothing can be more clear, than that those great truths are legitimately deduced from this text by our Redeemer: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" (Matt. xxii. 32 :) words which show, that, as a Divinity must exist in order that Abraham may have a God, so Abraham must be in actual existence, that God may be the God of Abraham; and, further, that, as Abraham was a compound being, composed of body and soul, this body and soul still existed as such; the soul in a state suitable to its spiritual nature; and the body, although decomposed and reduced to dust, yet under the eye and in the care of the Lord; and this to such an extent, that the declaration that God was the God of these patriarchs was sufficient not only to attest the continued existence of Abraham's spirit, but also to afford an undoubted pledge that Abraham, having the Lord for his God,

was certain to be restored from the ruins of death and the ravages of the grave, to more than his former identity, elevation, and honour.

In this way the Lord Jesus communicated a vast amount of essential truth to those who hung upon his lips, and through them to the church and the world in all succeeding ages. Of this our limits do not allow us to furnish even an epitome. A few prominent elements are here sketched, which the student is requested to fill up at his leisure.

Like his precursor the Baptist, (Matt. iii. 2,) Jesus Christ began his ministry by preaching repentance; (Mark i. 15;) and when he first sent forth his disciples to preach, they heralded forth the same requirement: (chap. vi. 12;) conduct which gives a lesson to every preacher of the gospel. The grand object of the Saviour was to turn men from their sins; and to this the preaching of the gospel should always be primarily directed. Our Redeemer also most strenuously insisted on the necessity of the new birth, (John iii. 3—8,) and taught the spirituality of God, and the necessity of worshipping him in spirit and in truth; (chap. iv. 24;) showed that external things did not induce moral defilement, which was only occasioned by the outgoings of evil from the heart; (Matt. xv. 19;) that love to God and love to man comprises the whole law, and makes up the religious duty of man. (Chap. xxii. 36—40.) Jesus also strongly enforced the necessity of entire trust in God, in respect of his providential government and blessing; (chap. vi. 19—32;) and enjoined giving primary and paramount attention to spiritual things. (Verse 33.) He insisted, likewise, on the necessity of a full and unreserved faith in the Son of God, as the great appointed means of spiritual life; (John iii. 15, 16, 18, 36; vi. 36;) and on the importance of confessing Christ in this world. (Matt. x. 32.) But the Saviour's teaching was most remarkable, by his positive assertion of judgment, to be followed by a final award of everlasting rewards and punishments; (chap. xxv. 31—46;) and these were made prominent as motives to repentance and righteousness of life. (Chap. xviii. 8; xix. 29.)

Not only did Jesus, as the great Prophet of his people, thus impart unto them the most wonderful spiritual instruction; he also proved, by a most marvellous course of miraculous action, that he was the Holy One of God; and that his teaching, therefore, came attested by the highest possible sanction and authority. It is not possible, nor is it necessary, to attempt here an enumeration of the miracles of Christ. But it



may be proper briefly to notice their nature, object, and the peculiar circumstances in which they were wrought.

In their nature, then, the miracles of Christ were not merely wonders, but such as unmistakably called for the immediate exercise of the essential attributes of Deity. Beyond the silly and profane parodies invented by Popery in the dark ages, or by benighted men at other times, the history of the world has never heard of any thing like the marvellous direct aggressions of the Son of God on the malignant powers of Satan. Nor must we allow the true character of these miracles to be explained away by those who are affrighted at the inventions of superstition, or influenced by the scepticism which the philosophy of this world so industriously disseminates. The demons expelled by the Lord Jesus were unquestionably devils, fallen spirits. And this exercise of Divine power by the Son of God was certainly a part of his redeeming work. For, you will scarcely need to be reminded that redemption is presented to us in the Bible in a twofold aspect,—by the payment of a price, (Num. xviii. 15, 16,) and by the exercise of power. (Exod. vi. 6.) And although these miracles made no part of the redemption-price, the great atonement, they constituted a portion of the manifestation of that power by which the captives of Satan were extricated from his grasp. This class of cases, therefore, presents the following points for our consideration. 1. They show the cruel malignity of Satan. Not satisfied with binding the spirits of men with the chain of sin, he, whenever permitted, extended his tyranny to their bodies; and, whenever he had this power, exercised it to torment and debase his victims to the uttermost. 2. These cases show the power of the Son of God over these Satanic enemies of man. In his temptation we see his invincible purity and wisdom; but in the authority which he always exercised over these fallen spirits, we perceive the most abundant proof that they could not resist his will. 3. We consequently learn from this class of miracles the perfect sufficiency of Jesus Christ to consummate his redeeming purpose by delivering “the prey from the mighty,” and beating down Satan under our feet. Here that spiritual power which crushed and prostrated the utmost strength of man was perfect weakness, and tremblingly obeyed the fiat of the Son of God.

There is also a peculiar manifestation of Divinity in the healing miracles of Christ. Many of these evidently called into exercise creative power. In respect of the numerous maimed persons who were healed by Jesus, this must have been the case; and it was probably the same with many of the blind,

lame, and dumb. But this offered no obstacle to the benevolence of the Son of God. "He healed them." (Matt. xv. 30, 31.) Of the same character was the Saviour's miraculous feeding of the multitudes of the people. No power but that of Deity could thus multiply food for thousands. It scarcely need be added, that stilling the raging of a storm, commanding the tempestuous waves of the sea to be at rest, and restoring a person to life after he had been dead four days, and that by the omnipotence of a word, afford ample evidence of the presence and power of God.

But the miracles of Christ deserve attention as much from the benevolence of their object, as on account of their wonderful nature. It is truly surprising, amid such a vast range of superhuman acts, to see the utter absence of all waste of power. We find nothing ostentatious, no objectless marvels. Utterly unlike fictitious pretenders, the Saviour went quietly and humbly on his way : his object was not the display of power, but the most elevated benevolence. In the most emphatic sense of the terms, he "went about doing good." (Acts x. 38.)

The number of these miracles, the circumstances under which they took place, and their continued performance through successive years, are certainly not the least remarkable features of this portion of our Redeemer's work. The attentive observer will most certainly perceive that they were such as cannot possibly be ascribed to trickery or deception. Take the raising of Lazarus as an instance. Notice the deep concern of Jesus and his disciples, the tender love of Christ for the family at Bethany, the overwhelming grief of the sisters, the presence of many respectable Hebrews from Jerusalem, the open, noonday character of the whole proceeding : imposture and guile are precluded by this combination of circumstances. Nor was this or other miracles of Christ so performed as to allow of any perversion of the facts, from the force of a deluded imagination : they were wrought under all circumstances, and on all occasions, under the eyes of multitudes, generally on the impulse of the moment, without previous concert or design, and frequently under the immediate gaze of his bitterest enemies. And, what is most remarkable, they were continued throughout nearly four years ; and were not only not denied by those who witnessed them, but fully acknowledged, and that to such an extent that those whose malignity prevented them from recognising them as works of God had no resource but to denounce them as the results of Satanic power. Altogether the teaching and actions of Christ

not only clearly demonstrate his Divinity, but form a most important portion of that work which he undertook as the Redeemer of mankind.

We have now to consider that part of our Saviour's career which is at once the most mysterious and affecting; namely, HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH. And here, my brethren, I may remind you, that we have not to trace this career of sorrow, pain, and blood, as presenting a subject for commiseration and sympathy. This, in respect of a small portion of such inflictions borne by any other individual, might not only be allowed, but required by the common instincts of humanity. We cannot contemplate the sufferings of Christ in this manner. We have here a subject infinitely more grand and sublime. The sufferings of the Son of God are not submitted to our scrutiny, that we, mortal men, may employ ourselves in vain efforts to gauge the amount of his anguish, or to comprehend the measure of his pain. No! We approach the sacrificial work of Christ as the crowning act of that unspeakable gift which this world received from the love of God the Father, as well as the culminating point of that oblation of himself which Christ presented for the sins of the world.

It may be proper and necessary here to repeat the observation of an eminent prelate,\* that the sacrificial offering of Christ must not be judged of by those notions of sacrifice which previously obtained in the world, as has too often been done. Much less are we permitted to follow that class of divines who, like Archbishop Tillotson, avow their belief that God condescended to appoint the sacrifice of Christ for the sin of the world, in compliance with the general notion respecting sacrifice which had grown up in the Pagan world! No, my brethren; the only way of investigating this subject with propriety is, to regard the vicarious sacrifice of Christ as the primary appointment of this kind, both in the order of importance and of time; (Rev. xiii. 8;) and, from what is taught us respecting this offering, to form our opinions of the object and design of all Hebrew and Heathen sacrifices.

Nor will our time allow us to refute at any length the objections which have been made to the idea of atonement generally, or to that of Christ in particular. The grand question on which all the difficulty of the case hinges is this: How can God be just, and yet justify the ungodly? For, in a world like ours, to punish all sin according to its demerit,

\* MAGEE on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol. i. p. 42.



would be to inflict universal destruction : while, on the other hand, to pardon all sin, unconditionally, would completely subvert the Divine government ; for the idea of government, where all are allowed with impunity to act as they please, is absurd. But then it has been suggested, that pardon might be dispensed on repentance. But if any kind of repentance were deemed a sufficient means of securing pardon, then it is easy to see that pardon would be universal ; for, what sinner, when confronted with the penal fruits of his sin, does not feel some measure of sorrow on account of his crimes, and repent ? The consequence just named would, therefore, be the certain result of every such arrangement. We cannot, however, entertain this notion, as we find that God in his providential government has not given such encouragement to repentance. When men by their sins have ruined their health, reputation, or circumstances, deep, sincere, and bitter repentance does not restore them to their former strength, status, or wealth. Penitence is not therefore the divinely-appointed means of averting the consequences of sin. Nor will any exhibition of the goodness, grace, and mercy of God avert the difficulty ; for, as we have seen, if sin is to be unconditionally forgiven, all government must thereby be destroyed.

The teaching of the sacred record comes to our aid, in this important matter, with clear and explicit information. It lays down one first principle, which we may take as our starting-point : "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) Assuming this, then, as the ruling principle of all the dispensations of God's mercy to fallen man, the whole subject is disentangled ; and, although grand and comprehensive, it becomes consistent and plain. Then, the blood of Jesus appears as the "blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi. 28.) The sacrifices of the patriarchs and of the Mosaic economy assume their proper character as typical and preparatory representations of the one great sacrifice which was to be offered in the fulness of time. And all Heathen offerings appear in their proper character, as imitations of these divinely-appointed oblations, more or less corrupted by the natural degeneracy attaching to all things passing, during long periods of time, through the corrupt channel of human nature.

I must here, my brethren, remind you, that, on this subject especially, we must be content to receive our information from the word of God. There is no place here for human device, invention, or speculation ; nor indeed for merely carnal reason-

ing. It requires a measure of moral fitness, and submissiveness of mind to the Divine word, to understand this subject, as certainly, although not to the same extent, as it does to apprehend a personal interest in its benefits. It is not, therefore, a subject on which we are called upon to pronounce what can or cannot be done, what is fitting or unfitting. Here, especially, we are meekly to learn the Divine will, from the Divine word, and to make this holy record the teacher of our ignorance, the standard of our conceptions.

In this spirit we will endeavour to ascertain the character in which the inspired scriptures present the sacrificial sufferings of Christ, and the advantages which flow through them to mankind.

It is fully admitted, that this point is of such vast importance in the scheme of Christianity,—involving, as it clearly does, the foundation of the sinner's hope, and the basis of all preaching,—that we must not be content to form our opinion respecting it on any isolated text of scripture; but rather with especial care to review the entire scope of the teaching of holy scripture on the subject, and thus to ascertain what is the precise import of the revelations given us by the Holy Ghost respecting the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ.

We will notice, first, a few of the promises and predictions which refer to this doctrine. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Gen. iii. 15.) “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.” (Isai. liii. 4—6, 10.) “As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” (Zech. ix. 11.) It cannot be doubted by any attentive reader, that these portions of holy scripture predict most emphatically the sufferings of the Redeemer as the foundation of the sinner's hope. Satan is to bruise Christ, even while the Saviour is destroying his power. The portion of Isaiah's prophecy is remarkable. It speaks of the vicarious sufferings of the Redeemer in a manner the most forcible and

exact. He suffered for us by Divine appointment, and thus opened to us the way of life. This is the clear and undoubted doctrine of these prophetic scriptures.

Other scriptures plainly describe the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, as the great object of his coming into the world, and the grand design of God in the gift of his Son. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.) "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." (Heb. ii. 9.) "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." (Rom. iii. 25.) It is freely admitted that, in many predictions, and other passages, reference is made to the several offices of Christ; but we do not find the teaching, or any other part of the Redeemer's work, spoken of as the great object of his incarnation, as his death is most expressly declared to be, in the texts which we have quoted. He was made a little lower than the angels, not principally to teach, or to work miracles, or to obey the law, but, emphatically and mainly, "for the suffering of death."

Other and numerous portions of scripture declare that Christ actually died as a sacrifice for sin, and instead of sinful men. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 6, 8.) "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. iii. 13.) "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter i. 18, 19.) "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) "I lay down my life for the sheep." (John x. 15.) "Who gave himself for us." (Titus ii. 14.) "Who gave himself for our sins." (Gal. i. 4.) "Who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. ii. 6.)

If language has any definite meaning, if words signify things or ideas, then these scriptures clearly teach, that Christ actually suffered in our stead for our sins. To no part of his miracles, to no teaching of his truth, to no action of his life, is the same efficacy ascribed, as to the precious blood of Christ.



There is, my brethren, a grand truth in this, which forms the very basis of our faith.

But further evidence may be adduced, and that of the most interesting and important kind. Not only do the sacred writers exhibit the sufferings of Christ as the great subject of special prophetic revelation, and speak of them as the culminating point of the Divine purpose in the incarnation of Christ, and state, in distinct terms, that they were endured as a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of mankind; but they are constantly referred to as the great procuring cause of all religious blessing, whether regarded in respect of the church collectively, or of individuals. This is of immense importance to an inquiry into the true character of the sufferings of Christ, as it shows beyond all contradiction the true doctrine of redemption. It will be remembered, that several of the passages already quoted are of this kind. Indeed, the apostolic writings are so eminently experimental and practical in their teaching, that it is difficult to select texts expressly relating to the efficacy of the atonement, which do not more or less refer to the immediate benefits resulting therefrom to individuals and the church at large. In addition, however, to the scriptures already given, we refer to the following, as bearing the most unequivocal testimony to the doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement.

"The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) In this remarkable text the blood of Christ is expressly declared to be "the blood of God;" and this blood, we are taught, was shed to purchase, or redeem, "the church of God." "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 14.) "Having made peace through the blood of his cross." (Col. i. 20.) "By whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Peter ii. 24.) "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.) "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 14.) "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. x. 19.) "As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God." (Eph. v. 2.) "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) "In Christ

Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. ii. 13.) "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." (Rom. iii. 24, 25.)

Thus does the whole tenor of the apostolic writings teach, that the blessedness of the church and the salvation of believers are consequences only of the sacrifice and blood-shedding of Christ. And the heavenly glory which is the final reward of the saints is attributed to the same cause; for the song of the redeemed before the throne of God is, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. v. 9.)

I have been the more careful to give the teaching of holy scripture at length on this doctrine, as it involves the foundation principle of the Christian system, and is, consequently, the grand truth which all gospel preaching should explicitly and constantly proclaim. Hence the apostles affirmed, "We preach Christ crucified." (1 Cor. i. 23.) "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.) "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) And the great apostle condenses the saving truth of the gospel proclamation into the following weighty and expressive language:—"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Rom. iii. 25.) From this, and other passages of similar import, it is clear that saving faith in Christ is emphatically "faith in his blood:" so that when this same minister was sent to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ;" (Acts xxvi. 18;) he was commissioned to preach Christ crucified, as the only sacrifice for sinful men, the only propitiation for human guilt. It is this, indeed, which gives the language of the apostolic writings the intensity displayed in such phrases as, "The precious blood of Christ;" (1 Peter i. 19;) "The blood of sprinkling;" (Heb. xii. 24;) and which, as we have seen in many of the passages already quoted, describe it as the procuring cause of man's salvation. "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of

Christ." (Eph. ii. 13.) "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.)

To this point, my dear brethren, I beg to call your devout attention: first, to the atoning merit of Christ as a doctrine. Do not be misled so far by plausible appearances as to think there is little danger in this direction; or that danger is only to be apprehended from avowed sceptics, or professed Socinians. Although deeply sensible of their mischievous tendency, I esteem them to be small indeed, in comparison of the lax notions which obtain among those who are esteemed orthodox, and even evangelical. All the teaching of holy scripture respecting the Saviour of mankind is exceedingly important, from a contemplation of his pre-existent glory, through all the wonders of his incarnation, humiliation, miracles, and teaching, to his cross; all is full of light and truth: and little does that man deserve to be called a Christian, and much less a Christian teacher, who does not diligently, carefully, and prayerfully study what holy scripture teaches respecting the nature, character, and career of his Divine Master. But it is his death which is, after all, the culminating point of the economy of grace. It is his blood which actually bought us all, as with a price. It is faith in this blood alone which translates penitent sinners from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Nor, as I have intimated, are we free from danger in respect of this doctrine. There are many who will speak of morals, and law, and grace,—many who hold up Christ as an example, and speak of him even as a Divine Teacher,—who are backward to speak of *faith in his blood*, who do not make the atonement so prominent as the Holy Ghost has made it. You, my brethren, must not fall into this snare. You cannot, if you are worthy of your fathers and your name. What is the glory of Methodism? The proclamation of a full, a free, a present salvation. You cannot preach this without giving the atoning merit of Christ its just prominence. Others may labour to school their fellows into morals, and even into religion. But if you will preach the doctrines of Wesley, you must know, and exercise, and preach "*faith in the blood*" of Jesus.

Nor are we to imagine that all the danger here is of a purely doctrinal character. With clear views on this subject, with the present taste for novelty and elegance in the pulpit, we are exposed to many temptations to give other topics precedence of this, the master-truth of the gospel. To check any tendency of this kind, to guard against every approach to this evil, let us



turn our eyes with steady and unwavering attention on "the Lamb of God," who came and died to take away the sin of the world. Let us recognise in him the only propitiation for sin, and that propitiation through faith in his blood. Let us make ourselves perfectly familiar with all the phases in which this great doctrine is taught in holy scripture, and trace, in the teaching of the holy apostles, all the blessings of the new covenant to this Fountain which is opened in the house of David for all sin and uncleanness.

But great beyond all comparison as is the doctrine of Christ's atonement, we must pass on to a brief consideration of his resurrection, ascension, and mediatorial reign.

The resurrection of Christ has been already noticed as a signal and convincing miracle : \* we now direct attention to this fact in its bearing upon the doctrinal system of holy scripture. The resurrection of Christ was clearly necessary to prove the vicarious character of his sufferings, and to vindicate and establish his assertion of the Divine Sonship.

The taunt of the Jews, "He saved others, himself he cannot save," however malicious and misplaced, involved a principle of unquestionable importance and soundness. If the body of Jesus had remained in the grave, not only would Christian believers have been deprived of that which now constitutes the best foundation of their hope, but they would have no assurance that his sufferings were accepted by God on their behalf ; no sufficient proof, indeed, that he was what he professed to be,—the Son of God. In a word, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Cor. xv. 14.)

In the resurrection of Christ, however, we see the clearest and most complete demonstration of the sufficiency and acceptability of his sacrifice for human guilt. He had said, "I lay down my life for the sheep. I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John x. 15, 17, 18.) But if Christ had not risen from the dead, what would have been thought of these declarations? The statement that he died for his sheep would not have been sustained. Even if the purity of his life in such circumstances would justify our faith in the sincerity of his intention, there would be no proof that his death was accepted as the sufficient ransom-price for the sheep ; and, consequently, his death would not have been an adequate foundation for our faith. But the resurrection of Christ justifies the sacrificial

\* Page 51, *et seq.*

oblation of the Saviour, and proves its perfect sufficiency. He submitted to die, even to lie in the grave, for the accomplishment of a given object : no clearer proof could be afforded that this object was attained, than his resurrection from the dead. This at once proved that the purpose for which he died, namely, to make atonement for the world's guilt, had been secured ; and thus we are assured, that as certainly as Christ died for our sins, he rose again for our justification.

But this does not meet the whole case. Jesus Christ had repeatedly predicted his resurrection on the third day after his death : indeed, this communication made an important part of his teaching. Hence we read, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matt. xvi. 21 ; xvii. 23 ; xx. 19 ; Mark ix. 31 ; x. 34 ; Luke ix. 31 ; xviii. 33.) And this teaching was a portion of his asserted claims to a Divine character, and stood intimately connected with the most lofty predictions of the prophets respecting his Divine Sonship. David had proclaimed the great truth, "Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee." (Psalm ii. 7.) And Jesus Christ, in reply to the adjuration of the high priest, confessed that he was the Son of God ; (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64 ; Luke xxii. 70 ; ) and was in consequence condemned to death. But could that body which was miraculously formed in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost, that manhood which had by incarnating the Son of God been made one with Deity, putrefy in the grave ? The spirit of prophecy had long before pronounced on this subject the most decided judgment : "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm xvi. 10.) That pure human soul which had been associated with Deity, was not to abide in hades, the place of separated spirits ; that holy tabernacle of flesh which had enshrined the Godhead, was not to be permitted to see putrefaction. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was therefore a glorious demonstration, not only of his completed Messiahship, but of his Divine Sonship ; even as the apostle says, he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 4.) The risen Saviour, therefore, presents to the world a perfect humanity which could not perish, because united with essential Deity.

There is yet another scriptural aspect of the resurrection, which must not be overlooked. If the body and human soul

of Jesus were thus raised from the dead, notwithstanding they had borne the sins of the world, because of their union with the Deity, what information does this fact impart on the grand subject of the ultimate destiny of mankind? Here we see human nature, in union with the Divine Son, made a sacrifice for sin. The hour of darkness gathers around the victim—the Lord lays on him the iniquity of us all—blood is shed—death is suffered—it is finished! But the immolated victim, resuscitated by Divine power, rises from the dead, the flesh and bones of Jesus again walk about on the earth. How is this? It shows, indeed, that the price is accepted; but it shows more. Did the humanity of Jesus take the place of guilty man, and is our Surety through the perfection of the atonement raised from the dead? Then, certainly, if the Surety is at liberty, his client cannot remain subject to bondage! Then hath Christ “abolished death,” (2 Tim. i. 10,) and “become the first-fruits of them that slept;” (1 Cor. xv. 20;) and the resurrection of the human body, through the redemption of Jesus, becomes not more an article of faith than an accomplished fact. Here, indeed, the church and the world have the fullest assurance that death cannot terminate the existence of man; that as was the case with Christ, so it will be universally. Man shall rise again, and receive, during a never-ending existence, according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or bad.

The ascension of the Saviour also merits attention: it forms one very important element in the mediatorial work of Christ. As his resurrection attested the validity of the atonement, and formed a ground for our justification, and gave to his people a song of triumph over the power of death and of the grave, so his glorious ascension was at once the most splendid proof which could be given of his triumph over all his enemies, and the means of communicating the greatest blessings to his church. Let me first call your attention to the fact. Do not allow yourselves ever to be led away from a certain apprehension of its substantial reality. The body of Christ, which walked about on earth, which laboured, suffered, and died, has truly ascended into heaven, changed and glorified indeed; but the same humanity which was seen, and felt, and crucified on earth, is now in heaven. Observe, also, what is said of the consequences of this exaltation of the Saviour. “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” (Eph. iv. 8.) He led “captivity captive:” he was exalted “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion,



and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." (Eph. i. 21, 22.) Nor is this all. He is not only represented as thus exalted, but as "having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col. ii. 15.) The Son of God had descended into a rebellious province of his Father's empire, where malicious and mighty foes had subverted the royal authority, and introduced every disorder. From this mission of mercy he now returns in triumph. He brings back, in mysterious union with himself, the nature which he had redeemed, and places it in unexampled honour and dignity, as a pledge of his ultimate success, and, at the same time, as conquerors of old bound their vanquished enemies to their chariot-wheels, so he exhibits the vanquished hosts of hell as spoiled of their power, and prostrate before his will. But Christ also received gifts for men. The wide range of blessing here indicated may be properly summed up in a word,—the gift of the Holy Ghost. It was this which he so expressly stated to be contingent on his "going away." "If I depart, I will send him unto you." (John xvi. 7.)

The mediatorial reign of Christ must also be briefly noticed. This exalted Saviour reigns as King in Zion. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" (John v. 22;) who, being raised to supreme dominion, exercises all power until the great purposes of redemption are fully secured. This was the ultimate appointment of the triune council of Deity, that the Son, having "died, and risen, and revived, might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Rom. xiv. 9.) And "he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.) How deeply affecting is the prospect thus set before us! The incarnate Son of God, having completed his work on earth, ascends to heaven, and there assumes universal sovereignty, and reigns over all, until, submitting either to mercy or power, no enemy shall oppose his will. So that, notwithstanding the clamour of carnal things sounds in our ears, and the din of earthly competition and contention seems to exclude every other consideration from the minds of men, the fact is, that the world exists only for the accomplishment of the redeeming purposes of Christ. The Supreme Ruler reigns for this: every other object and thing, however great in the estimation of earth, is regarded in heaven as subordinate and inferior. Do not fear, my brethren, to give full effect in your

judgment and behaviour to these scriptural views. He whose spirit or conduct is staying the progress of redemption, is thwarting the will of the King of heaven ; while the man who is spending mind or time or strength to effect the salvation of souls, is really contributing to the grand purpose for which the sceptre of heaven is swayed, and all the powers and majesty of the eternal God are displayed.

The redeeming work of Christ, my brethren, brings before our minds an inexhaustible theme. Our limits have shut us up in this discourse to a rapid sketch, a feeble outline ; but, thank God, there is no limit to our study of holy scripture, and spiritual meditation on this subject. Let me beseech you, then, to fill-in the detail throughout this soul-inspiring section of holy truth. Meditate on Messiah's pre-existent glory ; trace his wonderful manifestations to the Old-Testament church ; ponder well his wondrous incarnation ; and proceed to compare his life of humiliation, labour, and persevering devotion, with the prophetic revelations of ancient seers, and with the grand object for which he came into our world. Scrutinise with admiring zeal the spotless purity of his holy life, and mark its beautiful illustration of the Divine law. Follow his course of miraculous action with earnest attention, and note its benevolence of object, its simplicity of manner, its comprehensive range, its astonishing display of Divine wisdom and power. With still deeper emotion, filled with wonder, love, and awe, turn all the powers of your soul to a contemplation of your Saviour's sufferings. See him when it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief ; when his soul was made a sacrifice for sin, and he died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Fill your minds with scriptural views of this great atonement, and of the various aspects in which the word of God exhibits it, and the extent to which it forms the foundation of all gospel preaching. Dwell, also, on the fact of the Saviour's resurrection and its marvellous consequences ; his glorious ascension and mediatorial reign. Thus know and preach Christ ; and, filled with joy and gratitude, you will, with the great apostle, exclaim, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift !" (2 Cor. ix. 15.)

## LECTURE VIII.

### THE DOCTRINE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE RESPECTING PERSONAL SALVATION.

THE grand Aim of the Bible is the SALVATION OF INDIVIDUALS—Sin produces moral Darkness in the Mind—Man's primitive State—THE FALL and its fearful Results—Intimate Connexion between the federal Headship of Adam and that of Jesus—ORIGINAL SIN—Its Nature and Extent—Adaptation of revealed Truth to exhibit the Evil of Sin—The necessary Results of Christ's Atonement—Fatal Error on this Subject—The Relation of Christ as the risen and exalted Saviour to the Church and the World—The incarnate Saviour in his true and proper Personality as God-Man reigns in the mediatorial Kingdom—The infinite Goodness and Mercy of this Arrangement—Practical Consequences of the Sovereignty of Jesus—The grand Object for which Christ reigns, the Salvation of the World—Condition of Man without the Gospel—Exposure to eternal Punishment—Scriptural Proof of this Doctrine—THE WAY OF SALVATION—Man never takes the first Step toward God—He is sought out by Grace—The Institutions of the Gospel adapted to this End—The direct Influence of the Spirit of God on the Mind of Man.—REPENTANCE—Its Diversity of Manner—Essentially the same in Spirit and Results—Different Sense in which the term "Repent" is used—The Nature and Office of Repentance—SAVING FAITH—Its Nature described by Mr. Wesley—Further Exposition of it by Dr. Bunting—Nature of the Salvation thus obtained—JUSTIFICATION, its Nature and Extent—REGENERATION, what?—Obtained at the same Time as Justification—Further Privileges resulting from Justification—Peaceful Intercourse with God—ADOPTION—The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit—The peculiar Nature and Magnitude of this Blessing, and its Results in witnessing to our Adoption, giving Peace and Joy, Power over Sin, and a joyous Hope of Heaven—The Nature of spiritual Life and its Progress—The Necessity of spiritual Growth—Abundant Means provided for this—Duty to urge-on the Church to Progress—Importance of doing this in a scriptural Manner—ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION—What is not implied in this Blessing—In what it really consists—Its Necessity—In the Bible it is commanded—Promised—Prayed for—Experienced—And is the great End for which the Gospel is preached and the Promises given—The Term "Perfection" properly applied to this Grace—The appointed Means of its Attainment—Its Need must be felt—It is to be obtained by simple Faith in Jesus—All the Progress made by Christians can be retained—THE CHRISTIAN'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO DIE—His Triumph over the Grave, and everlasting Glory.

HAVING given an outline of what is taught in holy scripture respecting the nature and triune personality of God, and sketched, as far as our limits would allow, the information afforded by these sacred records respecting the incarnation and



redeeming work of Christ ; we have now to regard the teaching of holy writ in its practical bearing on the salvation of mankind.

Our researches hitherto have led us to a progressive, and, indeed, boundless, reverence for these inspired records, on account of the Divinity of their origin, the sublime truths which they reveal, the glorious manifestations of Divine wisdom and power they make known, and the perfect purity which they exhibit and enjoin. But in the perusal of these sacred oracles, we every where find one great object constantly kept in view. All the purposes of God, in these displays of his truth and grace, are evidently designed to be accomplished through the reformation and moral agency of individual men. Sin in this religious economy is shown to be the one essential evil. In its various developements it spreads darkness and ruin over the world, and exposes its inhabitants to Divine condemnation and eternal ruin. And the glorious interposition of grace aims at the regeneration of the world by the deliverance of every individual man from the guilt, power, and nature of sin. How this spiritual deliverance is to be realized, what are the nature, privileges, and duties of that state of grace, and its concomitant and final reward, we now proceed to consider.

Crime is constantly connected with mental and moral darkness. We consequently find men, whether sinning against God, transgressing the laws of their country, or trespassing on the rights of their fellow-men, expecting to escape from the consequences of their faults, by means the most unreasonable, extravagant, and absurd. Indeed, we not unfrequently find them confident of sinning with impunity, without having any definite idea of the means by which they are to secure such an exemption from denounced punishment.

The word of God gives no countenance to conduct like this. It proceeds on the clearest and most self-evident principles of truth and right ; and, consequently, exhibits, in the most lucid, ample, and convincing manner, man's absolute need of the salvation of the gospel, from his guiltiness, depravity, and utter natural inability to do any thing to propitiate or to please God. The Divine record does this by an historical account of man's fall, and an authorised declaration of its fearful results.

We have seen that man was made in the image of God, endowed with righteousness and true holiness, and formed on the model of his Creator's mind. He was truly made a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour. It is wonderful that this fact should have been traditionally pre-

served, and so frequently and so emphatically impressed on different ancient systems of mythology. One of the most striking of these is found in the writings of the Chaldean Berosus, by whom we are told that Belus, when about to create human nature, commanded his own head to be taken off, and his blood to be mixed with earth, and man to be formed of this strange compound mass. Thus did ancient tradition teach, that man derived his existence, not only from the dust of the ground, but from this dust impregnated and vivified by the life-blood of the supreme God.

None but real Christians, walking in holy and spiritual communion with God, can form any idea of the principal element in man's state of primitive purity. But this state, and all its blessings, were forfeited by sin. Man transgressed the commandment of God, and thereby subjected himself to the Divine malediction, and all its fearful concomitants. In the historical record of these events, we do not fully perceive the extent of man's danger, ruin, and loss; and for this reason we do not find man, for any given space after he is arraigned before his Judge, left to the unmitigated consequences of his crime. It pleased the Triune Jehovah, in whose will and purpose the Lamb of God was slain "from the foundation of the world," to intermingle great elements of his scheme of mercy with the judgment pronounced on the sinning pair; and thus to prevent our apprehending in this judgment the full consequences of human transgression.

If, however, this is not seen in the narrative of the fall, we are not left in ignorance or doubt on this most important subject. "The wages of sin is death." And this death is not merely the dissolution of the body, but rather "to be cast into hell-fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" (Mark ix. 47, 48;) and thus to "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 9.) And to this fearful doom all the race of Adam are exposed; for "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) When asserting these solemn truths, however, we are frequently met by allegations of their unreasonableness and want of equity. Taking up the language of ancient unbelievers, the objector maintains that the "father has eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." And as this case is sometimes perversely put, the teaching of holy scripture on this subject would seem to be opposed to reason and justice. But it

is not so. The law under which Adam was placed, and his federal relation to his posterity, must not be supposed to have been appointed antecedently to the plan of redemption, and the Messiahship of Jesus ; but rather as a portion of the great scheme of redemption. Consequently, to speak of the world as being brought into guilt and condemnation by the sin of Adam, and thus left to the punishment which sin merits, without reference to the appointment of a Redeemer, is to speak ignorantly and absurdly. We have no warrant from scripture, that the federal headship of Adam would ever have been appointed but in connexion with the federal headship of Jesus. If, therefore, a Saviour had not been prepared, as far as we can discover, the first sinners would have borne the punishment of their own sin, and it, and the race together, would have terminated with them. But as the scheme of redemption had been fully prepared in the counsels of heaven to meet the case of ruined man, we see the first and second Adam each exercising an influence over the whole family of mankind. "Through the offence of one many be dead." (Rom. v. 15.) "The judgment was by one to condemnation." (Verse 16.) "By one man's offence death reigned by one." (Verse 17.) "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." (Verse 18.) "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." (Verse 19.) Nor is the effect thus ascribed to the first transgression merely ideal. We are not to read these and similar portions of sacred scripture as figurative descriptions of the evils of sin. On the contrary, they speak of a plain and awful matter of fact. Through the offence of one many are indeed made dead ; for we are born in sin, shapen in iniquity, and are by nature, like all others, children of wrath. In a word, through the effect of this transgression every child of man is born into the world with a moral nature totally depraved, in a state of guilt and alienation from God, and consequently under his condemnation, and exposed to his wrath.

If our carnal reason cannot discern the wisdom or righteousness of that government under which such results flow from Adam's sin, rather than set our feeble and corrupted intellect to measure the wisdom and purity of His ways, who is infinite in every perfection, let us carefully and reverently endeavour to understand fully the whole scope of his revealed will, in the hope that it may afford us a solution of every difficulty. Are we startled at the idea that helpless, unconscious, smiling infants are born the subjects of deep depravity, and even sent into the world in a state of guiltiness ? If so, let us more than



ever seriously consider the infinite holiness of our God, and the fact, which we so frequently overlook, namely, that the redeeming scheme of mercy propounded in the gospel of Christ, so far from mitigating the evil of sin, or covering its deadly character, more than any thing else exhibits its inveterate intensity, and displays its loathsome nature. "The law entered, that the offence might abound." This is the necessary result of every revelation of the Divine mind. The more we see of his purity, the more fully we discern the evil of sin. In the scriptures, therefore, we have the consequences of man's transgression not only fully recognised, but carried out to their utmost extent. It covers the original perpetrators of crime with guilt, imbues them with depravity, exposes them to the curse, and dooms them to death. It does more: it extends its evil and depraving influence, and brings down its condemning power on every one of their posterity; so that the whole world is concluded under sin.

Nor need we fear to make these extensive admissions, and to receive these scriptural truths as articles of faith. For it has pleased the Lord to reveal to us a scheme of mercy fully commensurate with this extensive spiritual ruin. Do we not read that "*as* by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; *even so* by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life?" (Rom. v. 18;) that "*as* by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous?" (verse 19;) that, in fact, "*where* sin abounded, grace did much more abound?" (Verse 20.) So that, if, with astonishment and alarm, we see the offence of Adam sending forth a torrent of depravity and sin, which extends to every child of man, and gives a character and condition to each one; we, on the other hand, perceive that the atonement of our Divine Redeemer supplies a fountain of grace which fully counteracts this destroying agency. For in regard to children, those who, in their own persons, have not been guilty of actual sin, "the free gift" comes upon all "to justification of life;" and, in respect of all others, the gospel offers a free, a full, and a present salvation: so that, while the fatal consequences of the first transgression are fully admitted in their fatal extent, the great atonement so thoroughly meets the case of ruined man, that no one perishes because of Adam's sin, but only for rejecting the proffered mercy provided by Christ Jesus.

But I must here caution you, my dear brethren, not to think lightly of the prevalent and fatal error of ascribing to the work

of Christ a general effect, as an antidote to the guilt of sin. Nothing is more common than for persons to think that punishment will not certainly be inflicted on them on account of their sins, because of the great mercy of God in giving his Son to die for the world ; although they never put away their sin, repent, or believe. Now, the mercy of God never operates in this manner. "As"—in like manner that—"by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so," in a precisely similar way, "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;" that is, as far and as wide as the consequences of Adam's sin has affected the multitudes of mankind without any allowance or voluntary action on their part,—so far is it met and counteracted by the mercy of God in Christ. And hence all infants who have never in their own persons incurred guilt are saved by the atonement. So in respect of all others, as they are guilty and depraved through the sin of their first parents, so have they the means of salvation abundantly supplied them in the gospel of Christ. But if persons remain, of their own choice, in their sin, and still presume for deliverance from punishment on the mercy of God in Christ, such persons will find that they are guilty, not only of sin, but doubly so, because they neglect the great salvation which God has provided for them through the blood of his own dear Son.

There is one other doctrine to which reference must be made before we proceed more immediately to consider the process of personal salvation. It is the exaltation of Jesus to be the Lord and Saviour of sinful man. For it is not only important that we should know the necessary effect of the redeeming work of Christ on the spiritual condition of mankind, but equally so that we correctly apprehend the present relation of Christ, as the risen and reigning Saviour, to the world which he has redeemed by his precious blood. We can scarcely have this important subject presented to the mind in more clear or forcible terms than we find it in the memorable language of Peter : "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour," (Acts v. 31,) or, as he elsewhere puts the case, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Chap. ii. 36.)

We sometimes think and speak, as if Christ, having completed his redeeming work by his death, resurrection, and ascension, had, so far as his distinct personality is concerned, retired from immediate action in the administration of the economy of grace, which is sometimes supposed to be conducted by the Triune God, or more generally by the Holy Ghost. This

is an error. Not only does Jesus not retire from the scene, but, on the contrary, in his distinct and proper personality, as the incarnate Son of God, he is invested with all power in heaven and in earth, and reigns supreme over all worlds, for the prime purpose of carrying into full effect the great scheme of redeeming mercy. Observe the precise and forcible terms used by the apostle: "Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, HIM hath God exalted." "God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." Is it nothing for us to know, that our humanity in the person of Jesus is raised to the throne of heaven, to supreme rule in the kingdom of grace,—that this God-man is specially appointed, as a part of the gospel economy, to wield all the attributes of universal sovereignty, for the purpose of sustaining his church, and insuring individual salvation? and that it is to him that we are to look as individuals for grace and salvation? that he is our Master and Head, in so far as we are engaged in the work of saving sinners, and that he is prepared to dispense every blessing that either our personal experience or our public duty may require? These points are of so much importance, that we will give each a brief consideration.

Who now reigns in the kingdom of grace? Who is King in Zion? It is Jesus Christ, our incarnate Saviour. Nor are we at liberty to conclude that this is a distinction without a difference. As certainly as it was important that the several persons in the Trinity should perform different offices in the great plan of redemption; so it is important that we recognise the wisdom and goodness of this arrangement. The Father evinced his infinite love in the gift of his Son. On this boundless benevolence our minds may dwell with delight and profit, until our affections, kindled by that flame, break forth, and we love him because he first loved us. The Son came to do his Father's will. He gave himself for us. But in this case, there is a most remarkable peculiarity. We know God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, and, indeed, the Second Person of the glorious Trinity also, in his pre-existent state, in their true and proper Divinity through the revelations of the sacred record. But Jesus appeared among us, as a man with men. We cannot, in contemplating his character, think of him for a moment merely as God in human form. For, notwithstanding the numerous and wonderful proofs of his Divinity which pervaded his character, words, and actions, the proofs of his perfect humanity are equally clear and full. His hunger and thirst, labour, weariness, and want; the yearnings of his tender love, his deep



sympathy for man's sorrow; and, in fact, his whole career, show, that he was of our flesh, and bone, and spirit. Indeed, we feel throughout the entire narrative of his life, that he stands perfectly identified with our race; so that, while God with God, he was equally man with men; these two natures being blended in such mysterious union in him, as to make one person in Christ Jesus.

The truth which we are now contemplating rests on this basis, and assures us that this same Jesus is raised to the throne of heaven, a Prince and a Saviour; that this compounded nature is King in Zion; that he who walked up and down in Judea, that he who taught the people in the temple, on the sea-shore, and in the wilderness, who healed their diseases, and supplied their wants, who wept over their sorrows and their sins, and who loved them so much as to give his life-blood as the ransom-price of their souls; yes, this Jesus is by the right hand of God exalted to be both Lord and Christ, Ruler and Saviour to the world which he has redeemed. Unchanged in his nature, unalienated from our race, feeling the same identity with our state of being, the same sympathy and love for us, as when he hung upon the cross, Jesus reigns to dispense the blessings which he died to procure.

Who does not see in this fact a striking proof of the goodness and condescension of God? The fact itself, at first sight, seems strange beyond conception. That our human nature, however changed by Divine power, and prepared for a glorified existence, should not only be raised to heaven, but to sovereign dominion there, seems to transcend the limits of reasonable probability. And yet, is this exaltation more truly astonishing than the humiliation of the Godhead in the incarnation?—that the true and proper Deity of the Second Person should be placed in mysterious union with an infant, exist in a Hebrew peasant; be opposed, persecuted, and blasphemed; be arraigned at the bar of Pilate and condemned to death? If we fully believe the word of God, can any thing be more marvellous than this? At all events, is it not as wonderful for God thus to dwell on earth, as that the nature in which he had enshrined himself here should be raised to sovereign dominion in glory? But this fact also displays, in an eminent degree, the Divine goodness and mercy. In the affairs of mankind, nothing is more common than for the most excellent legislation to be nullified by defective administration, and the most wisely-devised and benevolent measures to be rendered of no avail by the faults of the agency through which it is attempted to carry

them into effect. Nothing of this kind can exist here. He who humbled himself to the lowest depths of poverty, pain, and infamy, to save man, is exalted to kingly dominion for the accomplishment of the same purpose. He who in his own person felt all the innocent frailties and infirmities of our nature, who by actual experience realised all the painful consequences of the provocation of sinners, the falsehood of pretended friends, the agony of unmerited obloquy, reproach, and scorn,—he, having resisted all, and endured all, is raised to be the refuge of his people in all similar circumstances. He who by individual contact with the destroyer, and all his legions, fully gauged the extent of Satan's malevolence, craft, and power,—he, having been made perfect through sufferings, and tempted in all points as we are, and knowing therefore how to succour those who are tempted, is raised on high to be our Prince and our Saviour. In a word, the Sacrifice is become the Sovereign. Is there not mercy and goodness in this arrangement,—mercy and goodness of the highest order? Do we not feel, that, if any combination of circumstances could help us to come with a humble, hearty faith to the throne of grace, it must be that combination which centres in Him who sits on the throne? Yes, my dear brethren, "we have an High Priest who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities," and to whom we can come with boldness, for every blessing which either our individual wants or public work may demand.

We further notice the fact, that this God-man reigns in the mediatorial kingdom of grace, swaying all the attributes of universal sovereignty for the purpose of sustaining his church, and reducing the whole world of mankind to the obedience of faith. It is important that we have in this sense clear views of this glorious exaltation of our Saviour. When Jesus met his disciples after his resurrection by appointment in Galilee, he said to them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth:" (Matt. xxviii. 18 :) language which clearly indicates his exaltation to supreme majesty and rule. He was indeed, as the apostle expresses it, raised "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Eph. i. 21.) And this elevation to power was for the purpose of universal dominion and government; for "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord." (Phil. ii. 9—11.) And this sovereign dominion Christ has wielded, and will continue to wield, until earth has fulfilled its destiny, and the final judgment shall terminate its history. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. xv. 24—26.) So that Jesus, raised to supreme rule, sits King in Zion, sways the mediatorial sceptre, and will continue to do so until mercy has fulfilled her mission to man; and when the final judgment consummates the happiness of those who have obtained redemption through Christ, and consigns to everlasting perdition those who have neglected his way of salvation, and the resurrection has abolished death, and placed all human nature, without any exception, in unlimited happiness or misery, then, the mediatorial work of Jesus being finished, he delivers up the kingdom to God the Father, who thenceforth exercises sovereign sway.

It is important that we very distinctly recognise this sovereignty of Jesus. He is said by the inspired speaker to be "both Lord and Christ," "a Prince and a Saviour." The term in the original, which our translators have rendered "Lord," properly signifies "master, proprietor, sovereign;" and that which is rendered "prince," means "leader, prince, king." The application of these titles, therefore, to the same person, is the strongest ascription of sovereign dominion. And this is emphatically ascribed to "that same Jesus" who was crucified. It was therefore the being which embodied the Divine nature of the Second Person and the human nature and human soul of Jesus in his individual personality, who was thus raised to the throne of heaven. It is he who now rules in all the affairs of nature, providence, and grace,—Jesus, the incarnate Deity, the God-man, with his humanity in perfect existence and action, in combination with Deity. This is he who sways universal empire: he has "power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to" those who submit to his will. (John xvii. 2.) My brethren, we see here our privilege and our duty. He is a Prince and a Saviour. He saves, that he may rule. As we experience salvation, we must submit to his government. Nothing is really salvation, which does not subject the mind to the will of Christ. His Lordship is a necessary consequence of his Messiahship. O let us individually realise both, and spend our lives in endeavouring to pro-



mote the great objects for which this glorious and wonderful sovereignty is established!

And what are these objects? This it deeply concerns us to know clearly and fully. It is, indeed, difficult to raise our minds to a just apprehension of this great subject. We will first glance at the government of universal nature: its extent in the heavens above, the depths below, the vast variety of material existence, the mineral, vegetable, and animal worlds. And yet this rule is so minute, that not a sparrow can fall to the ground unnoticed. But if the immensity and detail of this province of heaven's rule is so overwhelming, what shall we say when we consider it as comprehending the circumstances, condition, wants, and necessities of the whole human family, in all the ramifications of their national distinctions and collisions, together with all their relative and individual cares and requirements? And all this is comprehended in the sovereignty of Jesus. Yet even all this comes short of the grand object for which he reigns. This object is distinctly stated by the apostle: it is "to give repentance and remission of sins." Every other exercise of his infinite wisdom and almighty power is of secondary and subsidiary interest. It is for this, mainly and principally, that Jesus is exalted; and every other part of his sway is administered with special reference to this great end,—to lead mankind to the experience of salvation. O how fully has the Lord shown the importance which he attaches to the success of the gospel! No price is too precious to lay down for man's redemption; no efforts too vast to win him from sin to holiness. The means, indeed, by which this is effected, may be truly said to crown the series of wonders comprehended in the gospel plan of salvation. For not only did God become incarnated in human flesh, and suffer, die, and rise to the throne of glory, and reign in majesty, for the purpose of carrying into effect his purposes of grace; but he actually dispenses the Holy Ghost for the salvation of mankind. Yes, Jesus, the Mediator-King, bestows the Holy Spirit. This was his promise: "It is expedient for you," said Jesus to his sorrowing disciples, "that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John xvi. 7.) And this he fulfilled. When he "ascended on high," and "led captivity captive," he "received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." (Psalm lxxviii. 18.) You all know how gloriously this was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost; but we do not always clearly recognise the exact order in which

this blessing is given. The Holy Ghost is the Divine Agent which enlightens, convinces, regenerates, sustains, and guides the soul of man, through all the course of his religious life ; and he may be thankfully received, faithfully obeyed, or neglected, grieved, and resisted. But the Giver of the Holy Ghost is the glorified and reigning Saviour, as the apostle testified : "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, HE hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii. 33.) It is indeed Jesus exalted to glory who is thus constituted the Author of our salvation. How glorious in manifested truth are these revelations of the ways of God ! How profoundly interesting, merely as matters of knowledge, and yet infinitely more so, as means to the experience of Divine grace ! To this subject, then, in its practical and experimental bearing, we are now called to direct attention.

We have already seen that all, in their natural condition, are concluded under sin ; that we are naturally depraved and guilty ; and are, without exception, before being made the subjects of grace, condemned already, and the actual subjects of Divine wrath. (John iii. 18, 36.) And this fearful description of our sinful condition is rendered still more terrible by the plain declarations with which holy scripture abounds of our danger and doom after death. The sovereignty of Jesus is not merely nominal : it is real. He must reign until his enemies are subdued, by grace or power ; and in each case the triumph will be perfect : the saved will have their bodies rescued from the power of death, and be glorified with Jesus in heaven for ever : the wicked and incorrigible sinners, who persevere in refusing to submit to Divine mercy, will also have their bodies raised, but to a "resurrection of damnation." (John v. 29.) And this future punishment will know no termination. Perhaps on no point has the flimsy sophistry of scepticism been more signally defeated than when it has directed its efforts against this doctrine. The reason of the thing has been long since established. Men admit that sinners deserve punishment, but deny that they merit everlasting punishment. But if sinners deserve to suffer, it is undeniable that they deserve to suffer as long as they remain sinners. If, then, the only time and means of separating our sins from us are found in this life, and those opportunities are neglected, the everlasting punishment of sinners becomes inevitable. In direct consequence of their own neglect of the appointed time and means, they must remain sinners everlastingly, and, as such, must everlastingly

suffer. And this is the uniform testimony of holy writ: "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix. 44.) They go away into "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power:" (2 Thess. i. 9 :) their punishment is "everlasting." (Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41.)

With such motives to flee from the bitter consequences of sin, we turn to a consideration of a sinner's way of access unto God. Here it may be observed, that the first movement towards reconciliation is never taken by the sinner. The application of the gospel to the salvation of men is uniformly a revelation of Christ, as one come "to seek and to save that which was lost." This is true in regard to the permanent institutions of Christianity. The word of God, containing a complete revelation of the Divine will, a full developement of the evils of sin, and of the way of salvation, is placed in our hands. Besides this, we have a preached gospel. Men who have abandoned their sins, and found mercy, are called and qualified by Jesus Christ to proclaim to their fellow-men the way of salvation. Never was a means devised more directly calculated to secure the intended end, than is the preaching of the gospel to promote the salvation of sinners. And then, over and above these and other agencies, we have to consider the gift of the Holy Ghost, the light which enlighteneth every man, the convincing power which makes manifest the evil nature of sin and its fearful consequences. Perhaps nothing is more truly wonderful than the variety, continuance, and power with which this Divine influence is exerted on the human mind. Our memories, treacherous as they are, can supply many most remarkable instances, although infinitely more have perished from our recollection. The most affecting feature of this case, however, is, that these are direct manifestations of God to the human mind. When shall even we, who know and love him, fully apprehend the solemn importance of devoted attention to this heavenly influence? All the wondrous miracles of the Saviour's passion and death, resurrection and ascension, took place, as the royal Psalmist sung, for this purpose,—that the "Lord God might dwell among them." This has come to pass: the Holy Ghost is given to convince the world of sin, and to lead men to God.

In the process of salvation, the first result produced by the influence of the Holy Ghost in the human mind is repentance. The manner in which this is effected in different minds, is marked by almost infinite diversity. In some cases sudden



conviction seems to reveal to the soul at once all the horrors of its sinful and guilty state, so that it is filled with anguish, and finds no rest until it obtains pardoning mercy. In other cases, there is a gradual and growing enlightenment produced on the mind, so that the person can scarcely say when it begun, or how it has progressed. The diversity of feeling produced is also exceedingly various. In some instances fear, alarm, and terrible apprehensions of Divine vengeance, fill the soul; in others, there is a soft, sweet, gentle leading-out of the mind after God. As preachers of the gospel, we must not overlook these differences, nor speak as if all must be brought to God precisely in the same manner that we ourselves were. It is not of material consequence through what kind of feeling the mind is led, so that it is led to God. But it is very certain that a presentation of truth which would be likely to affect one class of minds, and to deepen the operation of the Spirit in one case, might be quite powerless in another; so that we should study to present the truth in every aspect, and to urge the multifarious motives found in sacred scripture, that every case may be met, and the particular bent of every mind receive the most efficient impulse toward God.

But, however varied in feeling and manner the progress of penitence may be, in its spirit and results it must in all cases be essentially the same. Nor can a question of much greater importance be propounded to the theological student than this: What is genuine godly repentance? In what does its necessary and essential character consist? We must endeavour to supply an answer to this inquiry. It will be necessary to premise here, that the terms "repent" and "repentance" are used in the Bible with considerable latitude of meaning. They are, for instance, sometimes applied to God, who is said to repent; although it is also said, that he is "unchangeable," and "that with him there is no variableness nor shadow of turning." The solution of this is found in the fact, that God does not change his mind, but simply vary his conduct, in consequence of a change in his creatures. If, for instance, he denounces punishment against a people, and they humble themselves and put away their sin, he spares them, and does not inflict the threatened evil; and then he is said to repent, the term being used in an accommodated sense, because it would be precisely applicable to man in such circumstances, although it does not, strictly speaking, apply to God, whose mind always bears the same aspect towards the same character. So, also, these words are sometimes used to denote, generally, a change of mind, or

an earnest wish that some action could be undone, or its consequences averted. In this sense Esau is said to have found "no place for repentance," because he could not avert the evils which he deplored. We must not, however, be influenced by these acceptations of the terms, in our estimate of the real character of evangelical repentance. This, in its nature, is a godly sorrow wrought in the heart by the influence of the Holy Spirit. This sorrow is always connected with a revelation to the soul of the true character and intense evil of sin. Its offensiveness to God, its foul and polluting effects on the soul, and the terrible danger to which it exposes the sinner, are all deeply impressed on the mind, although sometimes one, and sometimes another, of these convictions predominates. These seem to create the sorrow, whilst the sorrow, in return, seems to deepen and strengthen the convictions. But, whatever may be the state of feeling, wherever this repentance really exists it produces in the soul an entire alienation from sin; which is loathed and hated as "the evil and bitter thing;" and the mind, turning away from it, seeks refuge in God's mercy. Hence repentance is called "repentance toward God." From this uniform result, which is always produced wherever true evangelical repentance exists, it will be easy for a preacher to solve a question which not unfrequently perplexes persons in a penitent state of mind; namely, whether their sorrow for sin is sufficiently deep and painful. In reference to this, it must be distinctly recognised, that no sinner obtains pardon *for* repenting. His sorrow and pain, however intense, make no part of the ground of his obtaining mercy, which is wholly on account of the merits of Christ. The discoveries and sorrows of penitence are therefore necessary as means to an end; namely, the total renunciation of sin, and a full and unreserved turning to God. When, therefore, we find a penitent so fully imbued with a conviction of the evil and danger of sin, that he is ready to fly from it as from the face of a serpent, and to renounce it wholly, however apparently pleasing or profitable it might have been, and earnestly and with all his heart desires to live to God, then we may freely encourage such an one to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that he may be saved.

We are now led to notice the second great operation of the Holy Spirit in the process of human salvation,—the production of faith. Here, too, it will be necessary to offer an introductory observation. Faith, of a certain kind and degree, is necessary to repentance: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is." (Heb. xi. 6.) And generally the most clear and

affecting revelations of the evil of sin are made to the mind by the application of holy scripture; and some measure of faith is necessary to render the Divine word effectual to this purpose.

The faith, however, of which we have here principally to speak, is that by which a penitent sinner obtains pardoning mercy, and which, in fact, translates him, instrumentally, from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Let me give you here a brief exposition on this point from the pen of the venerable founder of Methodism. In his sermon on the Scripture Way of Salvation, he says, "Faith, in general, is defined by the apostle, *an evidence*, a *Divine evidence and conviction*, (the word means both,) of things not seen; not visible, nor perceivable, either by sight, or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a spiritual evidence of God, and of the things of God; a kind of spiritual light exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural sight or perception thereof. Accordingly, the scripture speaks of God's giving, sometimes light, sometimes the power of discerning it. So St. Paul: 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' And elsewhere the same apostle speaks of 'the eyes of our understanding being opened.' By this two-fold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our soul both *opened* and *enlightened*, we see the things which the natural eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard. We have a prospect of the *spiritual world*, which is all round about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties than if it had no being. And we see *the eternal world*; piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed.

"Taking the word in a particular sense, faith is a *Divine evidence* and conviction, not only that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,' but also that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. It is by this faith (whether we term it the essence, or rather the property, thereof) that we *receive Christ*; that we receive him in all his offices, as our Prophet, Priest, and King. It is by this that he is 'made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'"

Exact and clear as is this account of the nature of faith, it does not exhibit, as fully as seems necessary on such a vital point, the nature of its exercise. We therefore quote the following passage from the excellent sermon of Dr. Bunting on



Justification by Faith: "The object of justifying faith may be inferred from what has been before said, as to the originating and meritorious causes of justification. It has respect, in general, to all that Christ is set forth in the gospel as doing and suffering, by the gracious appointment of the Father, in order to our redemption and pardon. But it has respect, in particular, to the atoning sacrifice of Christ, as it is exhibited by Divine authority, in the scriptures, and as attested to be acceptable and sufficient by the resurrection from the dead, and his mediatorial exaltation at the right hand of God.

"The *acts* or exercises of this faith seem to be three: or rather, that faith which is required in order to our justification is a complex act of the mind, which includes three distinct but concurrent exertions of its powers. It includes,

"1. The assent of the understanding to the truth of the testimony of God in the gospel; and especially to that part of it which concerns the design and efficacy of the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for sin.

"2. The consent of the will and affections to this plan of salvation; such an approbation and choice of it, as implies a renunciation of every other refuge, and a steady and decided preference of this. Unbelief is called a *disallowing* of the Foundation laid in Zion; whereas faith includes a hearty allowance of it, and a hearty acquiescence in God's revealed method of forgiveness.

"3. From this assent of the enlightened understanding, and consent of the rectified will, to the evangelical testimony concerning Christ crucified, results the third thing, which I suppose to be implied in justifying faith; namely, actual trust in the Saviour, and personal apprehension of his merits. When, under the promised leading and influence of the Holy Ghost, the penitent sinner thus confidently relies, and individually lays hold, on Christ, then the work of justifying faith is complete; then, and not till then, we are immediately justified.

"On the whole, may it not be said, that the faith to which the privilege of justification is annexed, is such a belief of the gospel, by the power of the Spirit of God, as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust in Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls into his hands, in humble confidence of his power and will to save us? It will readily occur to you, that the several expressions, which I have just used, are employed in the holy scripture, as synonymous with that believing which is unto righteousness. (John i. 12; Matt. xi. 28; Eph. i. 12; 2 Tim. i. 12.)"

Having thus endeavoured to state clearly and fully the nature of that faith by which we obtain mercy, we will now proceed to ascertain the nature and extent of that salvation which is thus obtained. The first great element of this salvation is justification or pardon. I use this language advisedly, because these terms describe one and the same act of grace. Hence the apostle says, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses;" (Acts xiii. 38, 39;) where justification and forgiveness are clearly spoken of as the same blessing. And this forgiveness is complete; it respects all the sins committed up to the moment of its communication. "All manner of sin" is then forgiven. The justification is "from all things." The Lord does not pardon sin by degrees, but at once; so that, having found mercy, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." You will scarcely need to be informed, that this justification is not necessarily permanent; it does not terminate our probation; it is not irreversible. We may be unfaithful, and fall again into sin and condemnation. And as it may be forfeited, so it may be recovered. That justification of David, so pertinently used by the apostle, (Rom. iv. 6—8,) was, there can be little doubt, his second justification: so that, while all should fear, as standing by faith, lest they fall into the snare of the enemy, the full and free pardon propounded in the gospel may be offered as well to backsliders as to other sinners.

Some theologians have spoken of justification in such terms as to teach that it includes, not our being pardoned and accounted righteous through the merits of Christ, but our being actually made righteous. This is an error. Pardon or justification is an act of grace on our behalf, a great work is done for us; but it does not make us righteous by regenerating our nature. This is a separate and distinct act of grace, wrought, indeed, at the same time as our pardon, but differing in nature from that blessing, and, as Dr. Barrow observes, "connected with it, but not formally of it." As a most important part of our salvation, this operation of grace merits serious notice. Regeneration, or the new birth, is that work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man by which his nature is renewed in righteousness, and man is restored to the moral image of God, and made a partaker of spiritual life. This change of mind is described by the sacred writers under various forms of speech. It is called "conversion," "regeneration," "a new creation,"

or "the new creature," "putting off the old man with his deeds," and "putting on the new man." By this great change, the power of sin is broken, and the renewed soul is enabled to live under the influence of a faith working by love, and thus to maintain a good conscience toward God. Not that, by the measure of sanctification thus obtained, all sin is destroyed: this is not the case; but the new man has power over it, so that while his seed remaineth, and his faith continues, it cannot obtain the mastery. Nor, although all the features of the mind that was in Christ are impressed on the new-born soul, is it to be supposed that they then exist in full maturity. The man is then but a babe in Christ, and is called to "grow in grace" until he attains "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 13.) These blessings, however, always flow from the exercise of justifying faith, the pardon of sin, and the renewal of the soul in righteousness. The results which immediately follow the attainment of this grace are great and glorious. We will notice the principal of them.

The restoration of intercourse and peace with God. Before justification, man is an alien and a stranger; but no sooner is he pardoned, than he has sweet intercourse with his heavenly Father. "Being justified by faith," he has "peace with God." (Rom. v. 1.) Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and, as a consequence, "he was called *the friend of God.*" (James ii. 23.) And so are all who exercise like precious faith. A second result of justifying grace is adoption. God not only becomes the friend, but the Father, of those who thus believe in Jesus. Believers are constituted children of God; "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii. 17.) A third and crowning consequence of justifying faith is the habitual indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. This is the grand feature, the genius, of the Christian faith: believers are constituted the "habitation of God through the Spirit," and thus consecrated temples of the Holy Ghost. (Eph. ii. 22.) This result of the redeeming work of Christ has not received from theological professors the attention which it merits. It is unique, as a privilege of created existence. We hear of nothing of this kind in regard of angels. They are holy spirits, elevated and pure, doing the will of God. But, as far as our information goes, their holiness arises from their primitive purity and devoted obedience: we hear nothing of their being inhabited by God, or made the residence of his indwelling Spirit. This privilege is reserved for the redeemed; and sanctified humanity is



thus raised to the highest point of creaturely existence by being made the subject of Divine inhabitation. Does not the mysterious incarnation present some remote analogy to the dignity to which all believers are thus called? Whatever some critics and commentators may say, I have not the slightest doubt that this privilege was distinctly typified by the glorious Shekinah inhabiting the cherubim; although, unfortunately, in our translation the meaning of the inspired writer is perverted by the improper addition of "between," as though the Shekinah dwelt *between* the cherubim. Now in no instance is there any warrant for this in the Hebrew, the proper translation being "inhabited the cherubim." The same unfortunate error is also found in one of the noblest prophecies of the Psalmist, which bears directly on this point. In the passage which in our version is rendered, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell *among them*;" (Psalm lxxviii. 18;) the last two words are supplied: there is nothing answering to them in the Hebrew text. The passage has accordingly greatly puzzled commentators. I incline to think it refers to the privilege of which we are speaking, and indicates that the result of Christ's exaltation would be, that he would by his Spirit dwell *in* his people, and not merely *among* them,—which in another view, as our *Immanuel*, "God with us," is also correct. It is, however, very important for us to know that this is the great privilege of believers: they are the temples of the Holy Ghost. "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 Cor. vi. 16.) Indeed, so positively is this asserted, that we are assured, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.) But this indwelling God not only marks us out for the highest elevation in the heavenly world, and affords a pledge that there we shall be nearest the throne, but he also gives substantial blessings during our earthly career.

From this source we, in the first place, derive *perfect tranquillity of conscience*. This is effected by his bearing direct testimony to the fact of our adoption. For in the heart of the believer this is not "the spirit of bondage to fear; but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 15, 16.) This indwelling of the Spirit also ministers to our comfort by shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, (Rom. v. 5,) and filling our souls with joy and

peace. A second result of this indwelling Spirit is *power over sin*. With the Spirit enthroned in our hearts, we are enabled to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, in newness of life. (Rom. viii. 1.) And, lastly, this imparts a *joyous hope of heaven*. The fact of our adoption gives us a title to heaven; but the Holy Spirit spreads before the soul such glorious prospects of this felicity, that we are enabled to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," (Rom. v. 2,) and to "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xv. 13.) Let us, then, my brethren, give earnest heed to these glorious realities. In this age of formalism and rationalism, it becomes us to be doubly anxious to mould our religious experience and our public teaching according to the pure standard of God's holy word; and there is no point in which the revealed word stands out in more prominent contrast to the wisdom of this world, than in its insisting on the presence and agency of the indwelling Spirit in the hearts of believers. Let us vigorously maintain it as a doctrine, zealously urge it on all we teach; and, above all, let us be careful richly to realise it in our own hearts.

We must now pass on to a more particular consideration of the spiritual life, and its progress in the heart of the believer. It has been already said, that this life commences in regeneration, and is maintained in our hearts by the indwelling Spirit, who is called "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 2.) But this life is always the result of faith: "I live," said the apostle; "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) But whilst faith in Christ is the instrumental cause of spiritual life, sin inevitably causes death: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 13, 14.) "He that committeth sin is of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James i. 15.) It may not seem necessary to support, by scripture authority, such plain and self-evident axioms as those which we have just laid down. And yet the circumstances of the present times require it. To say nothing of Papists and Popery, are there not great numbers that call themselves Protestants, who teach and believe that this spiritual life is communicated to an infant by the rite of baptism, and continues through childhood and youth, unaffected by worldliness, vice, and sin, and, sustained and fed by the occasional reception of the Lord's supper,

still remains, warranting to him a hope of heaven and final salvation? I have confidence, that I need not warn you against delusions so opposed to the teaching of holy scripture as these; but we cannot be too careful in guarding against the widely-spread forms, and the numerous ramifications, of this evil. When once any instrumental means beside simple faith in Christ, is regarded as causing spiritual life, or when the existence and progress of this life are reconciled to the practice of sin, then the danger is great and imminent, however plausibly the case may be put.

When the principle of regeneration is brought into the soul by faith in Jesus, there is, indeed, newness of life,—old things are done away, all things are new. Duties, joys, pursuits, all are new; for all are spiritual, and calculated to lead the mind to God. But there is one consideration connected with this subject too frequently overlooked; I mean, progress in this spiritual life. I doubt if I should express myself too strongly, if I were to say that the law of all life is progression. To a great extent, certainly, if not universally, whatever lives grows; and that this is the design and purpose of the great Author of our salvation, in respect of the spiritual life of his people, is certain. The command to “grow in grace;” (2 Peter iii. 18;) the apostolic descriptions of spiritual life, “little children,” “young men,” and “fathers;” (1 John ii. 12, 13;) “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:” (Eph. iv. 13—15:) as well as repeated expostulations to this effect: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil:” (Heb. v. 12—14:)—All these scriptures show that when “born again,” “created anew in righteousness,” we ought to go on increasing in grace, knowledge, and holy action, until we attain the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. But, alas, how seldom is this



done! How seldom do the children of God thus progress in holiness! My brethren, bear with me, while I urge this matter on your prayerful attention. I do so, because I have a deep and painful conviction that the neglect of this increase "with the increase of God" is the great evil of the present day. We speak of our large sanctuaries, our ministers, congregations, gifts; of our wealth, order, knowledge, and orthodoxy; and well we may: we have unquestionably abundant reason for thanksgiving on these accounts. But what are all these in association with a lukewarm piety, a half-hearted church? What, if a farmer, looking over the growth of his crops, on which he has spent so much labour and cost, were to find from day to day the corn in one of his fields make no progress, but still remain just above the ground, the growth having altogether ceased; how would his heart sink and his hopes be blasted at the sight! What, if a parent should perceive a child still the same from year to year, making no progress to manhood: what agony would in consequence fill his heart! And yet, what class-leader does not witness such sights from week to week?

These considerations must arrest our attention. Nothing is more common than to hear persons praising God that they still, after having been converted ten or twenty years, retain a sense of his favour. Of course, this may be properly done; but should this satisfy? Ten or twenty years' privilege, and means, and spiritual culture, with no result but bare existence! It ought not to be thus. Without mooted any subject of controversy, does any plain pious man believe that the evils and distraction which have afflicted Methodism so seriously, during the past four or five years, could have existed to the same extent in a church where the great body of the members were steadily progressing in holiness? No, my brethren: it is not an improved polity, or greater talent, that we need; but increasing holiness. And we must contend for this. It is to be feared that some persons think increasing years add to religious experience, as age and contact with the world improve our judgment in secular matters; but it is not so. Neither years, nor constantly-recurring means, nor an active course of public duty, will improve our religious experience, but rather blunt our holy feeling and mar the purity of our spirit, unless richly sustained by the energetic operation of a faith working by love.

It has appeared to me, that our growth in grace is sometimes prevented by the notion that it is rash, or at all events unwise and unsafe, to make very earnest efforts after increasing holi-

ness, because such accessions of grace are so difficult to retain, and are so soon and so easily lost : as if, in fact, the difficulty of retaining religion increased with the measure of it which we obtain. Why, it would be just as sensible to caution a trader against becoming rich, lest it should lead him to bankruptcy. No ; the more religion we have, the easier it is to hold it fast. The men who can go on singing,—

“ We wrestle not now, but trample on sin,  
Through Jesus’s blood we the battle shall win,”

are not the men who are most easily subdued by the power of temptation. On the contrary, the great number of backsliders by whom we are every where surrounded, is at once a consequence and a proof of the low state of religion among us. But it has been seriously asked, “ Is it then the privilege of ordinary believers to make considerable progress in piety after the attainment of a sense of pardon ? ” We reply, Most certainly ; and no one is faithful to his God who does not thus progress. Look at the argument of the great apostle : “ If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (Rom. v. 10.) What do we learn from this, but that the further salvation of pardoned sinners is *much more* reasonably expected, and much more easily attained, than the pardon of sin ? In the former case, we were *enemies*, and our *pardon* was only to be procured by the *death* of our *Redeemer*. You see what an array of difficulties are here : our enmity to be subdued, our pardon to be attained, while our only Daysman dies in the effort to save : success here might have been doubted. Indeed, nothing but the overwhelming evidence furnished by the gospel would justify the hope of success, and the faith necessary to salvation. But if this was achieved,—and achieved it was,—and we by this means are made children of God, and heirs of eternal life, and our Saviour, instead of wearing the form of a servant, or hanging on a cross, or lying dead in a sepulchre, is now exalted to the throne of heaven, and possesses unlimited power, with the residue of the Spirit at his behest, and all hell under his control ; are not we warranted, in such circumstances, to expect all the fulness of his great salvation ? Does the pressure of worldly care and toil bear us down, or the violence of Satanic power and guile threaten to destroy us, or the weakness and treacherous character of our hearts imperil our safety ? Let us remember the apostolic judgment, “ Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Yes, my brethren ; but we must deeply ponder these important spiritual truths. It is our business, if we are faithful to our calling, most earnestly to study the high privileges of Christian life, to trace with the deepest interest the weighty motives to holy advancement which the scriptures present to our view, and to imbue our preaching with earnest, serious, soul-affecting exhortations to spiritual progress. It is necessary for individual comfort and consolation ; it is demanded to give unity, consistency, purity, to the church ; it is essential to hold forth an effectual warning and invitation to the ungodly. To promote this, must be our unvarying object and aim. But, then, we must be careful to urge on the church to take measures to secure this desirable end in a scriptural manner. Perhaps your recollection will supply instances of some who have attempted to urge-on others in the way of life, and who have not only failed in their purpose, but have seemed to do mischief by the effort. I speak with confidence when I say, I can save you from danger on this head by one simple direction : “Allure to brighter worlds, *and lead the way.*” First, realise the blessing, and then invite others to participate. You know, this is the method recommended in holy scripture. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” (Rev. xxii. 17.) Some urge others to *go* ; but this seldom does good, and often does harm. It is our privilege and our duty to invite them to *come*. Place yourself at the fountain-head of life and grace, purify and invigorate your spirit by the richest baptisms of the gospel, realise abundant blessing ; and then, strong in faith, and full of burning charity and zeal, cry to all, “Come, come to the water of life ;” being always able to say,—

“The mercy I feel    To others I show ;  
I set to my seal    That Jesus is true.”

Addressing Wesleyan-Methodist local preachers, however, I must not confine myself merely to showing the necessity of growing in grace and advancing in holiness. According to the theological doctrines held by our body, we have in this respect a plain and definite object set before us ; namely, deliverance from the last remains of sin, by the entire sanctification of our nature. As this subject is of equal interest in a doctrinal and practical point of view, I shall endeavour to state the scriptural teaching on this subject, as clearly and as fully as possible.



In the first place, it may be desirable to show what we mean by "Christian perfection," or "entire sanctification," as this Christian grace is frequently called. This is indeed necessary; for those who oppose this doctrine have, intentionally or ignorantly, collected the most absurd and extravagant notions, and represented them as contained within the limits of the doctrine as held by us.

By "entire sanctification," then, we do not mean a restoration of our nature to man's primitive state. We do not therefore believe, that, on attaining this grace, we are freed from our natural infirmities, such as errors of judgment, defects of memory, ignorance, or any other frailties of this kind. Nor is it supposed that we are freed from temptation: on the contrary, those who are thus saved are not unfrequently subjected to the most fierce assaults of our spiritual adversary. Still less is it imagined that we are brought into a state which does not admit of further progress. The blessing refers to the destruction of evil out of the heart; but, this being done, the soul may still indefinitely grow in grace, and proceed in the attainment of positive holiness. A calm consideration of these admissions will obviate another serious objection to this doctrine. It does not place us in such a state as that we have no further need of the efficacy of the atonement. Whatever purity of heart may be attained, a being so compassed with infirmity will still be subject to what is properly termed "involuntary faults." A person, for instance, from a mistaken judgment, or a defect of memory, makes a statement contrary to fact. He may do so, although at the moment he would rather die than disobey God: he does not, therefore, in his judgment and conscience, transgress the law, and, consequently, properly speaking, does not commit sin. Yet inasmuch as these infirmities are the results of the original transgression, we need the virtue of the atonement in all such cases. Mr. Wesley therefore never used the term, "sinless perfection," lest he should countenance the notion that he taught this blessing as implying a deliverance from these infirmities.

But, to explain distinctly what we regard as contained in this doctrine, it may be observed, that, in our sinful state, we "were free from righteousness;" (Rom. vi. 20;) our whole nature, heart, and mind, all the powers of our soul, were under the influence of sin. When "born again" at our justification, a new nature was implanted in the soul, and spiritual life began its course of action. Perhaps, indeed, the results of that change were so glorious, that for a season we were not conscious of

any indwelling enemy to our peace. At length, however, roots of bitterness sprang up and troubled us. We became sensible of the existence of pride, anger, unbelief, envy, worldly-mindedness, or other similar evils. But now the clearly observable distinction is felt to exist, that the mind has power over these corruptions, restrains their action, and, looking to Jesus by faith, does not, even under their influence, commit sin. Yet the existence of these remains of corrupt nature is painful and dangerous. They are sources of pain, as they are felt to be contrary to the will of God, by a mind that pants to do his will. They are dangerous, inasmuch as many under their influence have fallen into the snare of the devil. Few, indeed, have fully escaped being drawn into condemnation under their influence, and have consequently had again to apply for pardoning mercy through faith in Christ Jesus.

From these evils, we teach that it is the privilege of all believers to be delivered. This blessing is sometimes called "entire sanctification," because by it the soul is prepared for unreserved consecration to the service of God; or "perfect love," because the great result of this Divine operation is to enable the person thus saved to love God with all his heart. Sometimes the term "Christian perfection" is applied to this blessing, as that term appears to be repeatedly and expressly applied, in the text of scripture, to this state of grace. The main questions, of course, respecting this doctrine, are, first, Is such a spiritual state exhibited in the Bible as the privilege of the people of God? and if so, secondly, What is its appointed means of attainment?

First, then, does the Bible exhibit this deliverance from sin, and experience of the perfect love of God, as our privilege? On this head the following answer is given:—

1. It is commanded: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." (Gen. xvii. 1.) "Be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God." (Lev. xx. 7.) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thy neighbour as thyself." (Luke x. 27.) "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) "Be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. v. 18.) "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thess. v. 16—18.) "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.) "Beloved, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Peter iii. 14.)

2. This blessing is promised : "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled." (Matt. v. 6.) "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27, 29.) "He shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. i. 21.)

3. This grace is most earnestly prayed for : "Sanctify them through thy truth." (John xvii. 17.) "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. vi. 10.) "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii. 14—19.) "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (1 Thess. v. 23, 24.) "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." (1 Peter v. 10.)

But it is frequently asked, "Has this blessing ever been realised and enjoyed by the people of God?" The following and many other scriptures speak to this point. When the Christian church was first formed, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 4.) And afterwards, when the number of believers had been greatly multiplied, still "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts iv. 31.) Paul says of himself, "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) To the Thessalonians he says of himself and others, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." (1 Thess. ii. 10.) Peter calls the believers



to whom he wrote, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," observing that they had "purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." (1 Peter i. 2, 22.) And John says, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) And Jude addresses his epistle to "them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ." (Verse 1.)

Observe, also, the great end for which the gospel ministry is instituted, and the purpose for which these promises are given. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 11—13.) "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.) "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter i. 4.)

These quotations might be greatly extended, did our space allow; but it is not necessary. It is scarcely possible to conceive of a more full and complete exhibition of any doctrine, than these scriptures give of this. It is enforced by multiplied commands, offered by many great and precious promises, is most earnestly prayed for by the best of men, shown to have been extensively experienced in apostolic times, and is stated to have been the great end of ministerial labour, the grand object for which the promises of God are given. Surely this is evidence sufficient to silence every objection, and to lead every Christian heart to seek earnestly this more "excellent way."

But then it is said, "Why use a word so capable of misconception and misconstruction as 'perfection?' Why not give up the use of that term in this sense?" Our answer is, that we do not generally use this term; but we dare not abandon or repudiate its use, while it stands forth so prominently as descriptive of this blessing on the pages of inspiration: "Be ye therefore perfect." (Matt. v. 48.) "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect." (1 Cor. ii. 6.) "Be perfect."

(2 Cor. xiii. 11.) "Till we all come unto a perfect man." (Eph. iv. 13.) "As many as be perfect." (Phil. iii. 15.) "Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. i. 28.) "That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." (Col. iv. 12.) "That the man of God may be perfect." (2 Tim. iii. 17.) "Now the God of peace make you perfect." (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.) "The same is a perfect man." (James iii. 2.) "Herein is our love made perfect." (1 John iv. 17.) "Perfect love casteth out fear." (Verse 18.) "This also we wish, even your perfection." (2 Cor. xiii. 9.) "Let us go on unto perfection." (Heb. vi. 1.) Are we to give up, at the bidding of man, the use of language which the Holy Ghost has thus sanctioned?

The important question, however, presents itself, "If this blessing is thus fully exhibited to us in holy scripture, what are the appointed means for its attainment?" We will endeavour briefly to answer this inquiry.

It may be observed, then, that although there is a very great difference in the two states of mind, there is a remarkable analogy between the requisites for obtaining this grace, and those necessary to the securing of justification. For as, in that case, it is necessary for the sinner to have a clear and deep sense of his sinfulness before he can repent and obtain mercy; so here it is necessary that he should have a full sense of the existence in his heart of these remains of natural corruption. Without this there is nothing to rouse the soul into action, and move it to seek deliverance. More than this is necessary: not only must we have a deep consciousness of the existence of evil in our hearts, we must also have a firm conviction of the evil nature and offensive character of these inbred impurities. We are not, of course, to entertain any opinion adverse to the glorious doctrine, that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." We may, however, with the full enjoyment of peace with God, feel deeply sensible that the remains of sin in our hearts are contrary to the Divine will, and mar the sacrifice which we are called upon to present without reserve to God. If, as we know is the fact, a person in clear possession of the Divine favour may feel the risings in his heart of pride, unbelief, self-will, or any similar evil, although he may have power to keep these in check, so that he is not brought into condemnation, can we wonder that he should feel that he has yet within him enemies to God and to his own peace? that he should often cry out,—

“ But worse than all my foes I find  
The enemy within,  
The evil heart, the carnal mind,  
My own insidious sin ? ”

Ought he not in these circumstances to feel the intense evil of these impurities ? Further : it seems necessary that the spirit should so deeply feel this corruption, as to regard its continuance to be intolerable. For as no person is likely to obtain mercy, who can be persuaded to rest short of it : so, in like manner, if we live in a state of grace so low, that we can reconcile ourselves to the existence of inbred sin, we block up the way to its attainment. If, however, we are deeply sensible that this body of sin remains in us, that it exists in our hearts, contrary to the will of God, and is, even in its existence, displeasing to him ; and, further, if our love for Jesus and desire for his honour, and anxiety to glorify God, be so great, that we really feel,—

“ ’Tis worse than death my God to love,  
And not my God alone ; ”

then we are prepared to ask for, and to receive, this great salvation. And as we obtained pardon by simple faith in Jesus, so must we obtain purity. We are no more able to work out the latter in our own hearts than the former. One is as fully purchased for us by the blood of Jesus, and as freely promised us, as the other. We must come, then, to the great and precious promises, and exercise a faith precisely analogous to that by which we were justified. We must fully assent to what God has said respecting the remains of sin and its removal. Our will, affection, and choice must reject every other refuge, but God’s own revealed way of faith in Christ. We must actually trust, really venture to believe, that the word of his promise is fulfilled in us, and that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. This faith will save us ; and we shall be enabled to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin. May the Lord grant us this grace !

I need not dwell here on the rich consolation which the gospel offers, during the exposure of the people of God in this world to temptation, trial, and suffering. You know, we are not only called to warn sinners, to lead the penitent to Jesus, and the contrite believer to the attainment of perfect love ; but we are equally charged with a message of consolation to the Lord’s tried and suffering people. Let us never forget this part of our mission : “ Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.” And O, how full of consolation



is Jesus, what an all-sufficient refuge, for all who will come to him and trust in him !

Having thus seen the perfect efficacy of the gospel in delivering the soul of man from the guilt, the power, and the inbeing of sin, and making it the habitation of God by his Spirit, we are led to direct our minds onward, and ask, What prospects do these doctrines, and our personal experience of them, present to the minds of Christians as to the future ?

The first consideration that offers itself here, is the cheering fact, that, in all the varieties of our Christian course, there is not, in a single instance, any necessity for a step in the way of retreat : in no case can we be compelled to forego any blessing we may have attained. He who gives grace, can keep us from falling ; and if we are faithful, he will do it.

But there is still before us a dark way into an unknown world. We have, either by sudden infliction or lingering disease, to die, to pass away from all that is now tangible and visible, into the unseen world. Our bodies are destined to moulder into dust, and our spirit to await the fiat of the Eternal. In all this dread procedure, what hope have we for the future ? Thank God, we have in Christ not only the prospect of deliverance, but of glory. We will not go into poetical or rhetorical description ; but merely state a few consolatory facts likely to affect our own minds, and to influence our preaching to others. We have the fullest assurance that all the dispensations of Providence toward us will be dictated by the tenderest love, the most abundant mercy : underneath and around us are the everlasting arms. Even our God hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. xiii. 5.) Yes, he who has loved us so well as to die for the redemption of our soul, has numbered the hairs of our head, and will keep that which we have committed to his charge. Let it be our steady determination that "Christ shall be magnified in our body, whether it be by life, or by death," (Phil. i. 20,) and all shall be well.

Yet Christians sorrowfully say, "But I must die." Yes, and, called as you are to glory, to sit with Jesus in his glory, do you shrink from going by the same road ? Look back on your past experience, and let me ask, Do you not exult in the salvation of the gospel ? and only by your dying can this glorious salvation be consummated. In your soul the power of Christ has gloriously triumphed. But he will not proceed to save the body until sin has wrought in it its utmost evil. He did not, as you know, interpose at first for your spiritual deliverance, until you felt helplessly, hopelessly, ruined by sin. So,

in respect of your body, it must die, moulder into dust, and perish in the grave. But when sin has done its worst, and hell, death, and the grave have spent their united power, then this undistinguishable dust shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth to a resurrection of life. Rebuilt on the model of our Lord's glorified body, it shall arise to be re-united with the redeemed soul; so that we may go up and share his glory, and be for ever with the Lord. How complete is this triumph of the power of Christ! How glorious this salvation! Yet all this is "ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

My dear brethren, in this address we have had to review the most momentous elements of our holy religion. I trust I have been saved from any serious error in this discussion, and that the several points put before you may, when candidly and prayerfully considered, under the Divine blessing, prove conducive to your edification. Let it be our constant and earnest determination, in the highest and best sense, to "save ourselves, and them that hear us." (1 Tim. iv. 16.)

## LECTURE IX.

### THE OLD-TESTAMENT CHURCH.

**THE** Effects of Divine Revelation and Interposition on Mankind—The Origin of Religion—The primitive State of Mankind—The Fall and its Consequences—A Way of Access unto God opened—Elevated Condition of the first Pair—Progress of Sin—The Flood—The new World—The Piety and Faith of Abraham—Prominent Privileges of patriarchal Religion—The Mosaic Economy given at Sinai—The Appointment of seventy Prophets—Unfaithfulness of the Hebrews—The Preaching of Moses—Fidelity of the People during the Time of Joshua and his Successors—Fearful Relapse into Idolatry—Cases of individual Piety—Revival of Religion in the Days of Samuel—Accession of David to the Throne—His Character and Piety—He builds a Tabernacle on Mount Zion—The Worship celebrated there—Its happy Results—Accession of Solomon—The Temple built, and the Ark removed to its most holy Place—Continuance and Extension of this Tabernacle-Worship in the Origin and Multiplication of Synagogues—Fearful and rapid Apostasy of the Hebrews—Prevalence of Idolatry—For which God threatens to destroy Jerusalem, and send the Remnant of the People into Captivity—The Manner in which the probable Effects of this, on the Faith of the Hebrews, was averted—The providential Appointment of the Pious to be delivered from Death—Their Behaviour in Captivity—The golden Image—Important Effect of this on the Faith of the Hebrews—Further prophetic Revelations—Means divinely appointed to give Unity and Hope to the Captives—Their Return to Judea—Their religious State—The High Priest invested with Civil Government—Fidelity to Persia—Singular Issue of the Anger of Alexander—Political Changes of the Hebrew State during the Wars of Alexander's Successors—Successful Administration of Simon the Just—The Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek—This an important Means of making their Contents known to the World—Cruelty and Persecution of Antiochus, King of Syria—Noble Resistance of Mattathias—The War of Independence conducted by the Maccabees—Rapid Sketch of the Government of Judea from the Death of Simon to Herod—Doctrines then believed—The Triune Nature of God—The Jews did not expect their Messiah to be Divine—Christ crucified for claiming Divinity—The Pharisees—Sadducees—Essenes—Hebrew Faith and Piety.

WE have now to enter on a new section of our course of inquiry. Having completed our sketch of the doctrines of the Bible, it becomes necessary for us to consider their practical influence on mankind.

We proceed to ascertain the effect produced by all this truth on mankind at large. Have the results which have been wrought out in the world justified the conclusions to which we have arrived?



Does human history confirm or confute the opinions formed under a careful inquiry into the doctrines of the Bible? You will perceive, my dear brethren, that these are most important questions. But, before proceeding to reply to them, we must offer one preliminary observation. These revelations were not all made at the same time, but gradually unfolded and developed through a long series of successive ages. Nor was the practical operation of this Divine truth retarded, until its fulness had been revealed. We have, consequently, in tracing the practical results of this Divine interposition, to commence our inquiry at the outset of human history, and, proceeding through the age of the patriarchs, come down, through the course of the Hebrew church, to the days of Christ and his apostles. Nor will this course offer any obstruction to our object, but, on the contrary, greatly facilitate our obtaining a full acquaintance with the whole process of grace; inasmuch as we shall not only see the practical results of Divine influence extended over many ages, but shall also have the advantage of the information and evidence afforded by the numerous types and prophecies of the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations.

Having made this observation, we will proceed to trace the operation of revealed truth on the experience and conduct of mankind. In this lecture we shall extend our investigation to the whole period from the fall, to the birth of Christ. We must, therefore, use great brevity, and rather refer to than quote those portions of scripture on which we have principally to rely for guidance and information.

The origin of religion is co-eval with the origin of man. All that philosophers have written respecting natural religion, and its progressive developement in the world, is so much wild speculation. It did please the Divine Governor of the world to prove the depth and intensity of human depravity, by the inefficiency of the patriarchal and Mosaic systems to work out any general regeneration of human society. But the world was never left without Divinely-revealed truth and law, and the influence of the Holy Spirit; and it was the rejection of these which caused that barbarism, degradation, and spiritual ignorance, which philosophers have persisted in mistaking for the primitive condition of human nature.

Man was eminently the subject of Divine law and spiritual privilege from the beginning. Indeed, nothing in human history is more remarkable than the primitive purity of man and his subsequent fall. If we rely on the only account which the world has ever possessed of the origin of our race,

we learn that man was created pure and holy, and enjoyed intimate union and fellowship with God. My opinion is, that we have entertained generally too low and limited views of this intercourse. To dwell on this, may expose me to the censure, that, condemning speculation in others, I freely practise it myself. But surely there is a great difference between those speculations which are entirely opposed to the facts and doctrines clearly revealed in the scriptures, and the recognition of those circumstances, which, although not distinctly named, are certainly implied, in the Mosaic narrative, and, indeed, necessary, as details, to the harmony and completeness of the account. Beyond this warrantable range I shall carefully avoid adding to the teaching of the Bible.

Man, created in the Divine image, blessed with the frequent visible presence of the Divine Word, holding intimate intercourse with his Maker, was, nevertheless, subject to a law which he was required to obey, as a test of subjection and fealty to God. How long he continued to do so, we are not informed; but we know that at length he fell. The process was this: Eve, being *deceived* by the tempter, ate of the forbidden fruit. Adam, on being made acquainted with this fact, although fully cognisant of the sin, and of its consequences, also transgressed, and consummated the ruin of human nature.

The Word of God descended to judge the guilty pair; and, having pronounced a sentence which involved the great means of human redemption, he expelled them from Eden, and opened up unto sinful humanity the process of redeeming grace. The terms in which Moses speaks of this are very brief, and not happily translated in our authorised version. (Gen. iii. 24.) But, short and obscure as is this passage, we may venture to assert that, at this season, and in connexion with the events here recorded, God made known unto man his way of salvation through faith in Christ by the institution of bloody sacrifices, as types of the atonement of the great Redeemer.

I do not pretend to elicit all this from the verse to which attention has been directed; but, as already observed, this assumption seems essential to any correct apprehension of what holy scripture does undoubtedly teach on this subject. Observe here, first, that Abel obtained a sense of conscious salvation by faith, and that this faith was exercised through the offering of a sacrifice of blood. (Gen. iv. 4; Heb. xi. 4.) When, or by what authority, then, were such sacrifices first enjoined, if not when man was expelled from the tree of life to which he previously had access as an innocent

creature, and was thrown on a new and suitable manner of holding intercourse with heaven as a guilty and redeemed sinner? Again: we are told, that on the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden, to them "did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." (Gen. iii. 21.) Whence came these skins, if not from animals offered in sacrifice? for flesh was not then eaten as ordinary food. But what more fully sets forth the doctrine referred to, is the declared appointment of the cherubim and the infolding fire, to "keep" (that is, not to guard, to keep away from, but *to keep open, to maintain, and preserve*, under the altered circumstances of man) "the way of the tree of life." (Gen. iii. 24.) In our apprehension of this text, it teaches, that as, in the innocency of man, the tree of life formed a suitable sacramental way of approach unto God, so, when he became a sinner, the sacrifice of an animal, whose blood typified that of the appointed Saviour, and whose flesh eaten showed forth the life to be obtained by his dying, became a suitable and appropriate means by which man was to obtain intercourse with heaven in his new character. From the skins of such sacrificed animals the garments of Adam and Eve were undoubtedly made. And it is a fact which admits of no dispute, that no animal food but that of sacrificed clean beasts, was allowed by the Divine law to be eaten before the flood. (Gen. i. 29, 30; ix. 3, 4.)\* But the presence of the cherubim and the infolding fire still more fully show that this is the true interpretation of these scriptures. It cannot be disputed that the cherubim of Eden and those of the Mosaic sanctuary were precisely similar in their form and object. Had it not been so, Moses, who speaks of both, would most certainly have marked the distinction between them. He, however, on the contrary, speaks of them as well-known and identical. Now we know that between the latter was the place for sprinkling the blood of sacrifice, in order to its efficacy; and that here the bright luminous cloud, the shekinah of God, dwelt. And so, when properly rendered into English, Moses speaks in the text already quoted, thus, "So he drave out the man. And he inhabited" (or dwelt between) "the cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and the fierce fire infolding itself to preserve the way of the tree of life."

From all this it is abundantly clear to my mind, that, on the expulsion of Adam and his wife from the garden, they were not only favoured with the promise of redemption through a suffering Saviour, but that they also had given unto them a way

\* Sacred Annals, vol. i. p. 261.



of access unto God by sacrifice, essentially the same as that which the Hebrews possessed under the Mosaic covenant. A brief recital of the religious history of the patriarchal period will greatly confirm this opinion. "By faith," we are told, "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. xi. 4.) What is it, then, which is thus spoken? What is the information to which the apostle alludes? He clearly speaks, by *his faith*; and the communication made is undoubtedly this,—that sinners can obtain pardon through faith in the great atonement, and only by this medium. If this be so, and we see no other rational interpretation of these scriptures, then Abel must have had a sufficient revelation of Divine truth to form the basis of this saving faith. And, accordingly, the fault of Cain was not an error, a mistake, but a deliberate rejection of the appointed way of access unto God, and an obstinate persisting in coming to Him, not as a sinner seeking mercy through a Redeemer, but as an innocent person with merely a thanksgiving oblation. This seems to be the only key to the religious condition of this initial period of human history.

It will be necessary to observe here, that there can be no doubt that Adam and his immediate descendants were the most intellectual, refined, and best informed of the men who have ever lived. It is not to be supposed that man coming forth immediately from the hand of God should be an ignorant, uncivilised brute. No! Created in the Divine image, endowed with powers adequate to his position as God's vicegerent on earth, he must have possessed rare endowments. One of the most remarkable of the facts stated in this brief narrative is, that "Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." (Gen. ii. 19, 20.) It is admitted by all, that these names were suitable, and significant of the nature, instincts, and properties of the several creatures. But if so, how vast must have been the knowledge of the first man! and how great the compass of his intellect and sagacity, to have enabled him to perform such a task as this! The world has never since possessed such a truthful and forceful synopsis of a natural history of animal life as would be formed by a simple list of Adam's names. But this is not the most remarkable part of the case. These names were continued: "Whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that

was the name thereof." How was this marvellous result effected? By what means were these multitudes of names remembered by his posterity, and continued by them? When it is remembered that two hundred and thirty years elapsed from the origin of these names to the birth of Seth, this difficulty will be seen to be one of considerable magnitude. Men may sneer at the notion, that Adam not only spoke but *wrote*; but they cannot repudiate this notion, without being called upon to adopt others still more strange and improbable. Indeed, throughout the whole range of human history no people was ever known to progress in intelligence without the art of writing. Destitute of this, men sink into barbarism. Surely man, in the outset of his career, was not placed in such fearful circumstances.

It was under the tuition of such intellectual power, and in the presence of a worship so divinely revealed, that the first families of mankind grew up into life. Abel devoted himself to God, and in the appointed means found acceptance: Cain proudly rejected the way of atonement, sinned, and was driven into exile. Seth succeeded Abel, and probably followed his faith; although I must caution you against the notion that his descendants were the church, and those of Cain impious; a notion which is not taught in, nor receives any countenance from, the Bible. We are, indeed, told that Lamech, a descendant of Cain, introduced the sin of polygamy; and that Enoch, his contemporary of the line of Seth, was eminently holy. But the passage which has been often quoted as teaching the association of the pious at this period, (Gen. vi. 1, 2,) we regard as conveying a totally different sense; namely, the violent and licentious aggressions of the sons of mighty chiefs, on women of the humbler classes, that seems to have prepared the way for universal violence and sin, which occasioned the flood.

But the language which describes the piety of Enoch deserves a passing notice. He "walked with God." This has been often dilated on as expressing Enoch's faith; but does it not speak of Divine manifestation? If Enoch *walked with God*, did not God walk with him? And have we not here also an account of the intimate manner in which God revealed himself to the pious in this period? Further light is shed on the religion of this age, by a passage in the short Epistle of Jude, which says: "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have impiously

committed, and of all the grievous things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Verses 14, 15.) We know not from whom Jude obtained this passage. But we cannot doubt its truth as a portion of holy scripture. It accordingly shows that, in this early day, not only was the doctrine of a general judgment known, but that it was used in the discourses of the pious as a dissuasion from sin. To what extent, or how systematically, these religious discourses were delivered in those days, we do not know; but, a thousand years after Enoch, Noah was celebrated as a preacher of righteousness. (2 Peter ii. 5.) It seems, indeed, that the whole one hundred and twenty years during which the ark was preparing, was a season of special merciful visitation. (1 Peter iii. 19, 20.) But the piety and preaching of Noah were alike ineffectual: the old world was destroyed, and the family of the preserved patriarch had to begin afresh the population of a new world.

We have no information respecting the character and practice of piety subsequent to the deluge which merits special attention, until the time of Abraham. This patriarch was called to leave his home in the east, and to journey westward at the bidding of God, and under his promise of receiving, in his own lineage, the blessing announced to Eve, of being the progenitor of the Messiah. We are informed, in the last address of Stephen, that "the God of glory appeared unto Abraham:" (Acts vii. 2:) a phrase which seems to intimate that this appearance was accompanied with the shekinah,—brightness,—such as was afterward revealed to Moses in the bush and in the Hebrew sanctuary, and called emphatically **THE GLORY**. Abraham was not only eminent as a pious man, but equally so as a teacher of righteousness. "I know him," said the Lord, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." (Gen. xviii. 19.) To what extent this holy man was favoured to apprehend the scheme of salvation in the promised Redeemer, would form a most interesting and important subject for inquiry, but on which our limits forbid us to enter: it must suffice here for us to remember the declaration of Christ, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." (John viii. 56.) He, indeed, so fully realised this glorious redemption, that he not only obtained righteousness and justification by faith, but was styled, by way of eminence, "the father of the faithful." That Abraham not only worshipped God in company with his family and dependents, but also preached unto them, is evident



from many texts of scripture ; from whence it is also clear, that when he resided for any considerable time in one locality, he made special preparation for this sacred service. (Gen. xii. 7 ; xiii. 18 ; xxi. 33.)

We refer to two or three of the more prominent features of this patriarchal faith. The first and most remarkable is the visible and tangible manifestation of the Second Person in the glorious Trinity, in his true and proper character as God. The Word of the Lord thus repeatedly came unto Abraham ; and although Abraham washed his feet, and saw him eat bread and flesh, butter and milk, he had nevertheless no difficulty in addressing him as the LORD, the Judge of all the earth, the true God. How was this ? Did Adam learn in Paradise enough of the mysterious incarnation to know the *Word of the Lord* in his human form ? and was this knowledge handed down through the pious to the father of the faithful ? We have another strange manifestation of this in the case of Jacob. The angel with whom he wrestled is called God ; yet the struggle was certainly, in part at least, corporeal, or his thigh would not have been put out of joint : it was also mental and spiritual, for “ he wept, and made supplication unto him,” (Hosea xii. 4,) and obtained in return the blessing of salvation. Now, on what principle is the mystery, involved in the conduct of these patriarchs, to be solved ? They knew that man was not God, that flesh was not spirit : why, then, did they thus act ? And, still more : How was the humanity so clearly apparent, and the Divine attributes so fully displayed ? Sceptics may wrangle and mockers may blaspheme, when we attempt to solve difficulties like these : but there must be a solution of them ; and we can only see it in the recognition, by these patriarchs, of a larger knowledge of the doctrines of the Trinity and of the promised incarnation than is usually supposed.

The pious in this age had also the means of access unto God. Rebekah certainly enjoyed this privilege ; and Moses speaks of her case as though it was a very common one. (Gen. xxv. 22, 23.) When, in addition to this, it is known that the Israelites, before the law was given, had a sacred place which was recognised as the presence of God ; (Exod. v. 22 ; vi. 30 ; xvi. 9, 33, 34 ; ) and that the cherubim and the ark of the covenant were clearly no new appointments under the Mosaic code ; it can scarcely be doubted, that the way of access to God opened up to Adam after his fall by the blood of sacrifice, and the cherubim and fire of glory, had been preserved throughout the whole of this period by the believing patriarchs,

The religion of this first dispensation of grace gave to mankind access unto God, acquainted them, to a good extent, with the nature of God and of his purpose in redemption, and offered the means of salvation by faith to all who would believe and obey the Divine word. It was these essential elements of this religion which formed the basis of the Mosaic ritual; and these also, retained under many modifications and alterations, and prostituted to the purposes of idolatry, are found associated with the whole system of Heathen mythology, in all primitive countries.

In continuing our outline of religion to the time of Christ, we shall attempt neither to sketch the history of the nation, although, from its theocratic form of government, its history and religion were peculiarly connected; nor to give even an outline of the Mosaic ecclesiastical ritual and polity. Enough for our purpose on this head is given in our analysis of the books of Moses. It will be our object to trace the alternate progress and declension of its saving influence on the minds of men, together with the developement of the whole system, as preparatory to the gospel of Christ.

When the Mosaic economy was completely established by the revelations of Sinai, and by the erection of the tabernacle, and its inhabitation by the Divine Glory, the Israelites were brought very near to God. He had, indeed, by this process, claimed them as his own people. He gave them bread to eat, and water to drink. He defended them from their enemies, and resided in their midst as the supreme object of their worship. In a word, he was their King and their God. We are, however, in danger of over-estimating the effect of this, on the mind of the Hebrews. This manifestation of God, great and wonderful as it was, could not have been regarded by them as a new thing. The traditionary history of their ancestors was full of Divine interpositions, and of displays of the presence and power of the Lord. Their fathers had enjoyed access to God, and were guided and defended by his power. Nor was this intercourse between God and man peculiar to the Hebrews. Egypt, from whose bondage they had been so recently delivered, was professedly full of manifestations of divinity. It is true that this profession was false, that idols in that and other lands usurped the place of Jehovah; but this did not alter the effect produced on the public mind. They regarded the whole land as pervaded by Divinity; and the efforts of the priesthood, and the lying wonders sometimes wrought by demon agency, gave this impression great weight and vast influence; so that

the real and glorious manifestations of God to the Israelites, although affording an abundant authentication of his law and of their faith, did not stand out as they would do now, being mainly distinguished by the superior magnitude of the miracles wrought on their behalf, in comparison with the lying wonders which were exhibiting in the neighbouring countries.

On the complete establishment of the Mosaic economy at Sinai, therefore, it is not to be supposed that a great number of the Hebrew people were religiously impressed with the extent of their spiritual privileges, and personally desirous of realising them. And, consequently, when, under the full influence of this system, they began to feel the inconveniences of journeying, a spirit of murmuring and resistance against Moses was engendered, which soon broke out in daring rebellion against God. The means employed by the Lord to repress this spirit, clearly indicate its cause and character. The Holy Spirit was poured out on seventy of the elders of Israel, and they were endued with the gift of prophecy. All that this vast ecclesiastical arrangement and the most solemn religious rites could do, aided as they had been by glorious revelations of the Divine Majesty and Power, had been already effected; but these were insufficient to impress the people with due allegiance and devotedness to God. Therefore, to render the means already in operation effectual, the Lord poured out the spirit of prophecy on seventy men, who were mixed up with the masses of the people: these preached to them the word of God; and thus we see the origin among the Hebrew people of a mighty evangelical agency, which continued greatly to influence their religious condition throughout all the future history of that church.

But even this additional agency failed to save the Israelites of that day from the fearful consequences of unbelief. We have scarcely a more melancholy or admonitory fact on the pages of revelation than this,—that, of the 600,000 adult Israelites who, as the elect of God, came out of Egypt, but two individuals maintained such fidelity to the Lord, as enabled them to realise the blessings designed for all; namely, an entrance into the promised Canaan.

But in speaking of the Hebrews as the church of God, how are we to proceed with our historical sketch? It is, indeed, refreshing, after the scandalous iniquities of Baal-peor, and their terrible punishments, to sit on the plains of Moab, and to hear the impassioned discourses which compose the Book of Deuteronomy fall from the sanctified lips of Moses, the man of



God ; and to hear that “ Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.” (Joshua xxiv. 31.) We cannot, however, interpret this language to mean, that Israel served the Lord morally and spiritually to the full extent of their privilege and duty ; but rather that, during this period, they continued to worship him as their God, according to the ordinances which Moses had instituted. But even this qualified excellence did not continue longer ; for when these fathers had been removed by death, the Israelites turned away from the service of God, and worshipped idols. The manner in which this defection from true religion took place is detailed in Judges xvii., xviii. Micah, wishing to have in his own house a centre of worship, that it might not be necessary for him to appear at the tabernacle of the congregation, where the Lord placed his Shekinah, and appointed all Israel to come to sacrifice and to worship, made imitations of the cherubic figures, and of the other sacred things, and appointed a priest to perform the service ; so that he was thus provided with a substitute for the divinely appointed worship established by Moses. Now, although Jehovah appears to have been the object even of this religious service, yet as it was done in violation of his express command, it necessarily failed to secure a blessing, and exercised a most mischievous influence on the Hebrew character. Indeed, so fearfully was this the case, that we almost immediately after read of the open and flagrant idolatry of the Israelites, and of their consequent subjection in succession to all the surrounding Heathen nations.

The effects of this infidelity were most disastrous in every respect. As the law and authority of God were thus repudiated, there was no efficient civil government, and “ every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” The great bond of their nationality was thus placed in abeyance, and they degenerated from being one great people, into a number of isolated and independent clans. But the most fearful result of this defection was religious. Casting aside the law of God, they had no moral rule ; and, rejecting his appointed way of access for mercy, they were deprived of those enlightening and meliorating influences of his Spirit, which would otherwise have been their salvation. The Hebrew public, therefore, sunk into deep and fearful moral and spiritual degradation. Any enlightened mind must shrink from the pain of proving this : it will be sufficient for my purpose to refer to circumstances which are detailed in the sacred pages ; (Judges xix. ; 1 Sam. ii. 12—23 ;) and we

can readily form an idea of the condition to which a people must have fallen to make such things possible among them.

But whilst fully recognising this fearful declension, we must not suppose that it was universal. On the contrary, we find even then instances of conduct which a careless or casual observer would attribute to political sagacity, energy of mind, or personal heroism, but which we are taught to ascribe mainly to faith in God. "The time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae—who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises." (Heb. xi. 32, 33.) In these and other cases, notwithstanding the darkness and corruptions of the times, we see individuals exercising a strong faith in the God of Israel, and realising its happy and saving results. It is indeed probable, that, throughout the darkest period of Hebrew history, some individuals were faithful to the light of their dispensation, and walked in humble piety before God. We have at least one beautiful instance of this in the case of Hannah. Amidst the shocking and debasing pollutions of the times, she sought solace and refuge in supplication to heaven; and not only received the good she desired, but was the subject of heavenly influence, to an extent which raised her mind to a state of such sublimity and feeling, as enabled her to pour forth her thanksgiving in a song of praise to God, which, for beauty and sweetness of language, and grandeur of conception, has scarcely ever been surpassed. (1 Sam. ii. 1—10.)

Yet, notwithstanding all these cases of individual piety, the existence of the Hebrew church may be almost said to have begun with the revival of religion which resulted from the pious efforts of the prophet Samuel. His holy example and patriotic public conduct; the earnest and enlightened manner in which he induced the people to put away their idols, and to repent of their sins; (1 Sam. vii.;) and especially the impulse which he gave to the prophetic institute, by originating or reviving the schools of the prophets; (1 Sam. xix. 20—24;) prepared the way for a decided and general manifestation of devoted piety by the Hebrew people, which progressed during the life of this prophet, and reached its zenith during the reign of David.

There is scarcely any event in the history of the Hebrew church which displays in a more wonderful degree the gracious care and providential government of the Lord over his people, than the elevation of the son of Jesse to be king over Judah and Israel. Possessing natural endowments, which invested him with probably as many elements of real greatness as ever



fell to the lot of any fallen man, David stood forth as a person appointed by God to be the instrumental means of regenerating his nation. If any think this judgment of his character too highly drawn, let them scan the whole range of sacred and profane history, and point out a warrior superior to him in deeds of personal heroism, or in those powers of training men to martial pursuits, and organising and directing the operations of a great military force. Let them show us a more profound and successful statesman. David found Israel consisting of disunited and disorganised clans : he left it a compact, wealthy, and powerful monarchy. But, besides these elements of greatness, he was a master in the art of music, who transcended every other in his day ; and, above all, he was a poet of unequalled sweetness and sublimity. It is difficult to find a man who surpassed David in one of these particulars : it is impossible to find his equal in all of them. But David was as good as he was great. Read his beautiful Psalms. Mark the hallowed, profound, and extensive religious experience which they unfold. Notice his conduct from his youth, and see his steady devotion to the cause of God and his truth. It is true, he sinned, sinned foully ; but look at the depth of his repentance, his restoration to the Divine favour, his holy old age, and his happy death.

Raised to the Hebrew throne by the direct appointment of God, David had no sooner established the independence and security of his dominions, than he directed his attention to the religion of his people. He found this, although much improved by the efforts of Samuel, in a state of great disorder. Even the Mosaic sanctuary, indeed its most holy place, was incomplete and deprived of its most sacred furniture. The ark of the covenant, which had been taken from the tabernacle prior to the battle of Aphek, (1 Sam. iv.,) had never been restored to its place. When returned by the Philistines, it came to Bethshemish, and was afterwards placed in the house of Abinadab, on the hill, where it remained a long time, (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2,) and where, indeed, it was when David ascended the throne. How the holy ordinance of the great day of atonement could have been kept during this period, we are not informed.

Nor did David order the restoration of the ark to its place ; but, on the contrary, introduced an innovation which, the more it is considered, will appear the more remarkable, and especially as it is manifest that it had the sanction, even if it had not the direct appointment, of the Lord. The fact, however, is this,—David erected a large tent or tabernacle near his own house



on Mount Zion, in the midst of which he placed the ark of the Lord with its cherubims of glory; and, in this tent, with unveiled access to the propitiatory, David and his pious companions worshipped for many years. Here they had no priestly service or sacrifice, at least after the consecration of the place; only two persons of this order were employed, and they simply to sound trumpets, according to the ordinance of the Lord, for convening the people for worship. The nature of this worship is thus described:—"And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel." (1 Chron. xvi. 4.)

It is not an easy task to define, with certainty and accuracy, the courses of duty indicated by these terms; yet it is exceedingly important that we should have clear and definite information respecting this sacred service, especially as it not only formed the most interesting feature of the religion of the Hebrews during the best period of their history, but, as will be hereafter more fully shown, originated a course of religious service which ever afterward influenced the Hebrew worship.

These Levites were appointed, first, to minister before the ark of the Lord. The word means "to wait on, to serve," to minister, and is the term usually employed to set forth the duty and office of those who are appointed to conduct the worship of God. As there were no sacrifices offered in this sanctuary, a principal part of this duty was reading the law, and expounding and enforcing it in discourses to the congregation. That this was done, the following quotations from a Psalm, composed expressly to be sung in this sanctuary, make sufficiently evident. After celebrating the wisdom and power of God in creation, the Psalmist proceeds: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." (Psalm xix. 7—11.) It may be safely affirmed that when the law was held in such esteem, it could not have been neglected. But, more than this: it is certain that, unless the law had been kept constantly before the mind, and religiously enforced, it never

could have produced such results as are here ascribed to it. But it is clear, from other portions of the Psalms, that the law was read and expounded in this sanctuary. Thus David says, "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." (Psalm lxviii. 11.) For this publication of its sense and spirit was not confined to the Levites: David himself says, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest." (Psalm xl. 9.) This reading and preaching, with prayer to God, made the first important part of the worship of David and other pious Hebrews in this tabernacle.

The second object is said to have been "to record," or, as the term in the original might have been rendered, "to remember." This duty consisted of two parts: first, a religious celebration of the great things which the Lord had done for his people. This calling the past mercies of the Lord to devout recollection served the purpose of a record, and kept them in grateful remembrance. The second part of this duty was to continue a thankful recognition of the work of grace which the Lord was carrying on in the hearts of his people, by a declaration, from time to time, of their godly experience. Hence the Psalmist not only exhorts to "remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders and the judgments of his mouth," but also enjoins, "Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people." And his practice explained his meaning; for he said, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." (Psalm lxvi. 16.) And he assures us that he fulfilled his promise: "I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation." (Psalm xl. 10.)

The third portion of this service consisted of "thanking and praising God." This was unquestionably the service of song, of which we elsewhere read. A large portion of the Book of Psalms was specially composed for this religious worship, as you have been told in a former address.

I wish we could fully ascertain the spiritual nature and power of this sacred service. The inspired prophet, the sweet singer of Israel, the man after God's own heart, with his pious associates, before the ark of the covenant of God, in the immediate presence of the cherubim of glory, thus hearing the word of God, supplicating his grace, speaking their experience of his goodness, and singing his praises,—must have presented a spectacle of the deepest interest. We need not wonder that they realised the

most exalted views of the Divine service, and exhorted one another "to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;" nor that they, in the light of Divine teaching, apprehended the true intent of the law, and anticipated the coming of the promised Saviour, and the blessings of gospel grace.

Nor was the Royal Psalmist inattentive to the moral and religious character of his associates. When celebrating in a beautiful ode the ascent of the ark to Mount Zion, in language which was at the same time prophetic of the ascension of Christ, he thus specifies the character necessary to entitle any one to participate in this worship: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him." (Psalm xxiv. 3—6.)

It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the important results which flowed from this arrangement. As a very curious inroad on the Mosaic ritual, it deserves serious attention; but as a means of rearing up an enlightened and influential piety in the Hebrew capital, it is a grand event. That all the influence of David's royal position, elevated character, and earnest piety, should be exerted to foster such a worship, and to extend its blessed influence, is a circumstance which must be fully considered, before we can form any notion of the religion of the Hebrew church in the days of David. Let the reader carefully peruse all the Psalms written by David, and addressed to the chief musician, and the Psalms of Asaph; and, considering the sanctified eloquence and deep piety of the royal poet, let us form our opinion of the worship in which such hymns were sung, where such a person occasionally preached, and where the service was made agreeable to his mind and his piety.

Nor was this an ephemeral institution. Throughout thirty years, this worship was continued to enlighten and to bless the Hebrew people. We have here, my brethren, the grand secret of the greatness of Israel on the accession of Solomon. This worship had caused a deep and earnest piety to pervade a large portion of the population of the Hebrew capital, and probably extended its influence far into the distant tribes.

At length David was removed by death, and Solomon ascended the throne and built the temple. He was then divinely directed to take the ark, from the tabernacle on Mount Zion, to the most holy place of the new sanctuary: this was



done ; and we have no further direct information respecting the tabernacle of David, or of its worship.

But it is most improbable that such an institution could have been terminated at such a time and by the then ruling powers. Solomon had grown up into manhood and piety under the influence of this worship. So fixed was David's soul on it, that, when compelled to leave the city by Absalom's rebellion, his friends took the ark out of the tabernacle to accompany the king ; but he ordered it to be returned. This, however, did not arise from unconcern. Short as was his absence from his capital, no language is more pathetic and forceful than that in which David lamented his absence from his favourite sanctuary. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : when shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm xlii. 2.) It is most improbable, therefore, that Solomon, who then deeply revered his father, and served his father's God, should have put an end to this worship. The ark was, indeed, removed ; but its place could be supplied by some suitable receptacle for the sacred scriptures, and the worship be continued as before. It is more than probable that this was done.

The extent to which this spiritual and unceremonial worship affected the religion of the Hebrews, and has been recognised as such in holy scripture, has never been adequately considered. Sion, or Zion, was the watchword of Hebrew piety, and the inspiring theme of holy prophets in all succeeding ages of Hebrew history. And what is meant by this? Where was Zion? Some persons have ignorantly or thoughtlessly told us it was the temple, as the centre and ideal embodiment of the Hebrew faith. But, for this notion there is no scriptural warrant. Mount Zion was never a general name for the elevated range on which Jerusalem stood, as Moriah was. Zion was the name of the small hill on which the royal house of David and his tabernacle stood, and was separated from the site of the temple by a narrow but deep valley. Nor was the temple, in the estimation of the prophets, the ideal embodiment of the Hebrew faith, but, rather, the tabernacle of David. I am not aware that there is, in the whole of the Old Testament, a single passage in which the term "Zion," or "Mount Zion," refers to the temple. There is one simple but sufficient proof of this. Generally, the prophets, by this term, set forth the kingdom of Messiah,—its privileges and glories. Now, it is certain that this was not a restoration of the temple, but of the tabernacle of David ; for Amos prophesied the triumphs of the gospel in these terms : "In that day will I raise up the taber-

nacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old." (Amos ix. 11.) This the apostolic council at Jerusalem declared to be fulfilled in the gospel of Christ. (Acts xv. 16, 17.) Whenever, then, my brethren, you see Zion on the page of holy scripture, referring to any period after the reign of David, understand it as alluding to the spiritual worship conducted in the tabernacle which stood on that hill, and in which the royal Psalmist worshipped. This will give you some just ideas of the vast importance which holy scripture ascribes to that institution.

But, in passing from this important subject, the question arises, Did this tabernacle on Mount Zion lead to the erection of other similar places of worship in other parts of the country occupied by the Hebrews? While the ark remained in this tabernacle, this would certainly not be done. But when the ark had been taken to the temple, and this tabernacle possessed nothing but what might be provided in any part of the country, it seems exceedingly probable that pious Hebrews going up to Jerusalem to the great religious festivals, and mixing in this worship, would, on their return, provide themselves with similar means for religious edification. That which seems so very probable is, I think, proved to have taken place by an important and very beautiful portion of scripture: "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence." (Isaiah iv. 5.) When this text is read in its connexion, there cannot, I presume, be a doubt that it refers to places of worship: what else can be meant by "every dwelling-place of Mount Zion and her assemblies?" It is equally certain that these could not have been imitations of the temple. There could not have been, we know there were not, any such imitations. What, then, were these assemblies? They were, most unquestionably, what they are called: they were imitations of David's tabernacle, and as such were called "dwelling-places of Mount Zion."

We have here the solution of a difficulty which has puzzled many learned men; namely, the origin of synagogues. They evidently arose out of a desire to possess a means of worshipping God as David did in his day, and in process of time became very numerous in Judea. Hence we read, in a psalm supposed to have been written about the beginning of the Babylonish captivity, these words: "They have burned up all the synagogues of God in



the land." (Psalm lxxiv. 8.) We find, indeed, repeated indications of this worship in the scriptures, and that under circumstances which justify the idea of the prophets having assisted in it. We instance the inquiry of the husband of the Shunamite, when his wife was going to Elisha : "Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day ? It is neither new moon, nor sabbath : " (2 Kings iv. 23 :) language which clearly intimates that on the sabbath and on festival days, it was customary for the people to go to meet the prophet. This is confirmed by the words of the apostle : "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day." (Acts xv. 21.)

This evangelical worship exercised, therefore, a great and long-continued influence on the Hebrew church, and mightily promoted the experience of individual piety. But the religious defection of Solomon, and especially the public introduction of idolatry, gave a fearful blow to the faith of the Hebrews. For it is abundantly clear, from the history of Judah and Israel, as well as from the writings of the prophets, that the progress of idolatry was accompanied by the prevalence of all kinds of vice and impiety. After the death of Solomon, our attention must be confined to the kingdom of Judah ; for, although the gracious interpositions of God, through the instrumentality of successive prophets, long maintained in Israel a struggle between truth and error, and produced some brilliant cases of individual piety, the public religion of that part of the Hebrew people was idolatrous, and the most pious and devoted servants of the Lord in those tribes, from time to time, retired to the kingdom of Judah, that they might be able to join in the ordinances of the house of God.

Even in Judah, however, the decline of religion was fearfully rapid and extensive. During the reign of Rehoboam, it is said that "he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him ; " (2 Chron. xii. 1 ;) so general was the departure of the people from the ways of truth and righteousness. In the early part of the reign of Asa, that monarch made a vigorous effort to check the progress of idolatry, and to bring back the people to the worship and service of God ; and, so far as external arrangements could do it, this was effected. But in the latter part of his reign, this same sovereign greatly departed from the promise of his youth, and actually imprisoned an inspired prophet because he faithfully declared unto him the Divine will.

During the following reign, the cause of religion progressed ; but, on the death of Jehoshaphat, an awful inroad was made on



the national faith by his successors, whose rejection of it, and guilty preference for idolatry, not only filled the land with idolatrous worship, but caused the services of the house of God to be abandoned, and the temple to be shut up. Joash, on ascending the throne, through the pious zeal of the high priest, caused the temple to be cleansed, and its worship to be revived. But even this sovereign fell into idolatry in the latter years of his reign, and actually conspired with the most wicked of his people, and caused the high priest Zechariah to be stoned to death in the courts of the house of the Lord. Amaziah and Uzziah, who next in succession ascended the throne, displayed a similar character. In the early part of their government they ruled righteously, and promoted the true faith; but in mature age they fearfully fell into sin and error.

This brings us to the times of Isaiah, Amos, and Micah. We can say little of the religion of the Hebrew church from the days of Rehoboam to those of Ahaz. Undoubtedly there were many pious persons in private stations who served God, and met together for holy worship. Yet, whilst the government and the capital were thus frequently oscillating between the service of the true God and the foulest idolatry, the general state of religion must have been very low. The first chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah affords a faithful portraiture of this most melancholy case. And the prophet Amos, whilst delivering an earnest address to his countrymen in the true spirit of prophecy, points out the tabernacle of David as "fallen" down, full of "breaches," and in "ruins." Nothing could more fully prove the sad decay of spiritual religion than the abandonment of this sanctuary to ruinous decay. (Amos ix. 11.) Whatever sterling piety existed must have been driven into solitude and silence, before the place where David worshipped could have been thus neglected.

Nor have we reason to believe that any improvement of a permanent kind took place in the religious character of the Hebrews. There seemed to be a brief revival of religion in the days of Hezekiah; but this did not avert the impending calamity. It is scarcely possible to conceive of greater spiritual agencies being used under that economy than those which were brought into action in the piety, zeal, and impassioned discourses of Isaiah and his contemporaries. Yet even these failed; and the Hebrew church had so completely apostatized from God, that the filthiest abominations of the idolatries of all surrounding nations were actually perpetrated in the most sacred parts of the temple at Jerusalem. (Ezek. viii.) We need not wonder that, under

such continued provocation, the Lord should abandon his own sanctuary, and give over the people whom he had chosen to the most severe punishment.

This was a measure, however, of the most awful import to the cause of revealed truth and spiritual religion in the world. Hitherto, from the time of the Exodus, the Hebrew people had not only stood before the world as the elect people of God; they had also been called into covenant with him as a grand means of accomplishing the great scheme of redemption. Hence we find that the promised Saviour was to descend from Jacob and David, as well as from Abraham: so that not only was the religion instituted by Moses full of typical allusion to the coming Redeemer, but the regal family and the national existence also were identified with him in such a manner that to remove these seemed to be the death-blow to the great hope of the world. To some extent, probably, this intimate connexion between the family and sovereignty of David, and the work and kingdom of Christ, might have led the Hebrews, in their most fearful rebellion against God, to conclude that as they seemed so necessary to the accomplishment of the declared purposes of the Lord Jehovah, they should be preserved, notwithstanding their heinous offences. Certainly the ruin of the kingdom, city, and temple of Jerusalem was calculated to bring almost insuperable difficulties against the faith of a pious Hebrew. He might not unreasonably ask, "If, with the Mosaic ritual service complete, aided by all the *prestige* of its holy sanctuary, in connexion with the promised everlasting covenant with the house of David, the Hebrews could not be saved from apostasy and ruin; what hope can be entertained, that the faith of Israel will ever be sustained in the absence of all these advantages, and when the people are trodden down in captivity and banishment?"

In many respects the fearful infliction was administered in the manner precisely adapted to meet this difficulty, and to diminish its influence to the uttermost. Ezekiel had been taken into Chaldea long before the destruction of Jerusalem. He was, however, miraculously made acquainted with what took place there, preparatory to the destruction of the city, not only as matters of fact, but also in respect of the Divine purpose and intention, and the principles which were acted on in this eventful crisis.

In this way the prophet saw a combination of living cherubim, somewhat similar to those seen in Isaiah's vision. These living creatures were, however, on this occasion, not on the propitiatory, as in the most holy place; nor surrounding an

elevated throne, as in the vision of Isaiah ; but as being over it, and connected with living wheels which rolled onward in any direction in obedience to the will of the spirit. These cherubic figures spread about their wings, which formed a canopy over their heads, and on this was a throne, and on the throne sat the likeness of a man. (Ezek. i. 26.) These were seen by the prophet in the court of the temple ; (chap. x. 3 ;) and as he looked he saw the glorious Shekinah, which shone forth from above the cherubim in the most holy place, leave that position, and, passing through the sanctuary, rest for a moment on the threshold of the temple ; (verse 4 ;) and then take its place on the throne of the living cherubim ; thus identifying itself with the likeness of the appearance of a man which sat there. (Verse 18.) Then the living cherubim, and the wheels and the throne, with the glory of the Lord, hovered over the east gate of the temple ; (verse 19 ;) and afterward over the midst of the city, and, lastly, on the Mount of Olives : (chap. xi. 23 :) after which the prophet saw them no more. Thus did the Lord show to his servant, that he had abandoned his sanctuary on account of its pollutions ; and in doing so, gave a new pledge of the incarnation, and of the consummation of the economy of grace, by the appearance of a man invested with Divine glory, on the cherubic throne. Observe, also, that in this abandonment of the city and temple to justly-merited ruin, the last resting-place of this glorious Shekinah was on the Mount of Olives, just where the same Divine Person, when incarnate among men, wept over the same city, in anticipation of another such terrible infliction. This fact gives a forceful meaning to the words then uttered, which is too often unnoticed : “ *How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !* ” (Matt. xxiii. 37.)

In this vision the same prophet was further informed as to the principle which would be acted upon throughout the terrible ruin about to be inflicted on this apostate city. Nothing is more clearly set forth than that, in all the massacre and destruction which ensued, whether actually inflicted by the Chaldean soldiers, or burning houses, or by other means, there was no accident, nothing unprovided for. Before any minister of vengeance was sent forth, a mark was set on every one whose spirit mourned over the sins of the city ; and these were appointed unto deliverance, and all beside them were cut off without exception. (Ezek. xi.)

It was this providential discrimination which gave to the



captives generally a character very different from that which had prevailed amongst the population of Jerusalem before its destruction. Yet even these were far from being so devoted to the service of Jehovah as might have been expected, from the mercies and chastisements which they had experienced. It is a difficult task to ascertain the religious character of the Hebrew captives, after the ruin of the Hebrew capital and polity. But it seems to be sufficiently evident, that, while they met regularly for the purpose of worship and religious instruction, they indulged in great and aggravated iniquities: "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words." (Ezek. xxxiii. 31.) So that these Hebrews in their captivity were accustomed to assemble together for worship and instruction, and there was among them those whom the Lord called *his people*; and even the godless and wicked conformed to their manner, and listened to the words of the inspired teacher. But, notwithstanding this, their hearts were not right, they did not obey the commands of God, but lived in the practice of gross sin. (Chap. xxxiii. 25, 26.)

These Hebrews had not been long in the land of their captivity, before an insidious but violent aggression was made on their faith; which was so gloriously repelled, that it tended mightily to raise the hopes and confirm the faith of the pious among them. Nebuchadnezzar, having completed his conquests, and returned to his capital laden with wealth and honour, caused a great image of gold to be made and set up near Babylon; and, having done this, he collected together all the great officers of the country, and all the governors of the provinces, and commanded them to fall down and worship this golden image. At the same time, it must be observed, the king felt the deepest interest in the universal adoration of his image; and was so confident that opposition to his will in this particular might be expected, that he actually prepared a fiery furnace, and had it heated in perfect readiness to destroy any who might disobey his commands. Now, what was the object of all this? If, as is frequently supposed, this was done only to add another image to the many objects of idolatrous worship already in Babylon, was it worth such extensive preparation, and calculated to excite so much concern in the royal mind? To collect such an assembly from such an empire, must have been a work of difficulty, time, and hazard. Nor can we think that a sage politician like Nebuchadnezzar would have dared all this, merely for the gratification of enforcing compliance with

his own will, unless some great object of national importance had been involved in the proceeding.

We think this was the case ; and will therefore briefly state what we believe to be the explanation of this affair, although our limits will not allow a full statement of the reasons on which our opinion is founded. It is an admitted fact, that all the ancient kings of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia regarded themselves as possessing not only unlimited regal power, but a sacred religious character, which entitled them to be worshipped as divine ; and weighty reasons have been assigned for believing that this claim originated in the assumption set up by Nimrod, of his being entitled to demand universal sovereignty as the Promised Seed which was to come into the world. The recent discoveries in Nineveh and Babylon clearly prove that the sacred triad of these nations was composed of the great Father, the great Mother, and the promised Son ; and the reigning king is always identified with this Divine Son. Now, if, on the occasion before us, the king of Babylon had, after the completion of his conquests, collected together all his officers of state, and all those intrusted with the government of the provinces, and required them to perform an act of worship to an image of himself in this character ; we see the great political object which the occasion required : we also see how this would consolidate his power, and, by a solemn act of religious fealty, unite into one government all the different nations which he had subdued. In this aspect of the case, also, we find ample reason for expecting an opposition to his will. Almost every ancient nation was taught, by its traditions, to expect the Promised Seed to appear among them. The same kind of triad existed in Egypt as in the East, and the arrangement of their temples and system of religion fully recognised the expected appearance of the promised Son. To say nothing of the Hebrews, therefore, the proud conqueror had great reason, in this instance, to expect that his will would be opposed, and that some one of this multitude, strong in his peculiar national faith, would refuse to receive the king of Babylon in this divine and regal character.

It must not be supposed that our view of this case is mere surmise. It is not only warranted by entire agreement with the history and religion of these times, but is distinctly taught in holy scripture. The position which we have supposed Nebuchadnezzar to assume, Isaiah distinctly says he would assert. "Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : I will

ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the Most High." (Isai. xiv. 13, 14.) These words were spoken of this king, and of no other person : and when were they fulfilled ? We answer, On this memorable occasion. Here he claimed to be recognised and worshipped as a God ; and the only way in which mortal man ever attempted this, is to identify himself with the Son of God.

You will see, my brethren, that this act evinced not only consummate pride and impiety, but a fearful aggression, especially on the faith of the Hebrews. Even in their humiliation and captivity they clung to the hope of Israel, and trusted in the promised coming of the Son of David. But now, if, after every visible type of the kingdom of Christ had been swept from the earth, and nothing was left but the naked promise of God, the king of Babylon should be recognised and worshipped as the promised Divine Son by the heads and rulers of all these assembled nations, would it not give a death-blow to this hope and faith ? Was this done ? The gorgeous image was erected, the fiery furnace prepared, the vast multitude of the world's aristocracy convened, the command given, the musical signal heard, and the general prostration took place. But the king was soon informed that this was not universal, and found that nothing could shake the determination of the three intrepid Hebrews : they were, accordingly, cast into the fire. Now let us mark the result : the king watched the process with intense interest : the multitude waited with breathless anxiety to hear the issue : at length the astonished monarch is compelled to dash from his lips the draught which he had at so much cost prepared, and himself to announce to his vast host, *I am not the Son of God, HE is walking in the fire with the redeemed Hebrews !* Well might Nebuchadnezzar confess that this grand event "changed the king's word !" Yes, instead of returning to their several countries and homes, celebrating the completion of all ancient prophecy and tradition in the divinity and universal reign of the king of Babylon, this multitude of dignitaries retired under the assurance that the proud conqueror had attempted a vain assumption ; that the Son of God, although not yet revealed, stood essentially connected with the Hebrew people, and identified by this display of miraculous power with their nation and their faith. Nay, more : these nobles are sent to their different spheres of public life, charged as by a new imperial statute on this account to revere the God of Israel. It is difficult to conceive of any thing calculated to impart a more efficient and public support to the grand princi-



ple of revealed truth, and to the faith of the Hebrews individually, than these circumstances.

Nor was this the only interposition which the Lord granted to his people in the time of their depression and sorrow. It seemed, indeed, that, as all the visible and external pledges of Divine favour and support had been taken away, the Lord more abundantly manifested a knowledge of his ways, and cast increasing light on the general economy of grace. About this time, Nebuchadnezzar, having completed his conquests, and consolidated his power, was earnestly occupied in considering the continuance of his rule, and the duration of the kingdom which his prowess had reared up. While revolving these matters in his mind on his bed, he fell asleep, and the Lord gave him the remarkable dream of the great image. (Dan. ii.) This vision, as explained by the prophet, laid open to the mind of the king, and also to the Hebrew church, the general course of events which would transpire in the world from that time to the coming of the promised Messiah. It was shown that the kingdom of Babylon would be succeeded by the empire of Persia; that this was to be followed by the universal dominion of Greece; which should be succeeded by the imperial sway of Rome; and that, in the days of those kings, the kingdom of God would be established on earth. These prophecies marked out the succession of these events with such precision as scarcely to allow of misconception, and afforded the Hebrews, in the future history of their nation, an unerring standard by which to test the coming of the promised Saviour.

Further revelations made to the same distinguished prophet specified the exact time of the Messiah's coming, by placing it seventy weeks of years, or four hundred and ninety years, after the restoration of Jerusalem. (Dan. ix. 24—27.) And as the duration of the captivity had been previously fixed at seventy years, (Jer. xxv. 11, 12,) the completion of the purpose of God in the promised redemption of the world was fully revealed. Nor were these prophecies confined to the communication of information respecting the chronology of this grand event. Very great and important light was cast on the results which would flow to the church and the world from the advent and work of Messiah. (Dan. ix. 24.) Means were thus placed in the hands of the Hebrew people, which, when used by a devout mind in connexion with preceding revelations, would enable it to form some definite idea of the nature of this kingdom, and of the time when it might be expected.

Yet, notwithstanding these wonderful displays of the Divine

prescience on behalf of his "chosen," they were not kept fully alive to their religious privileges and duties. Considered as a people, the Hebrew captives appear to have settled down in the several localities in which they had been distributed, and to have so far reconciled themselves to their condition, as to have rendered their restoration to their own land, when regarded merely as a political event, impossible. Accordingly, we find Ezekiel, when introducing this subject by his peculiarly bold and vivid imagery, speaking of them as a collection of dry bones covering the surface of a valley. (Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14.) The meaning of the prophet here has not always been caught by commentators. His imagery is based on a figure of frequent occurrence in the prophetic writings, by which a nation, or body politic, is spoken of as a human body; as when Isaiah so forcibly declared the existence of fatal disorder in the kingdom of Judah, by saying, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint," &c. (Isai. i. 5, 6.) Ezekiel lived to see the termination of this fatal disease in death; and, looking over the scattered and disconnected families of the captive Hebrews, he could perceive among them none of that connexion and union necessary to the formation of a community. Not only were they without political life and power, but so disjointed as not to have political existence: the elements were scattered, and did not even form a body. Now, whilst in this condition, no liberty, law, or privilege, which the ruling authorities might award them, could produce the restoration of Israel. But the prophet states the means by which this was effected. "Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." (Ezek. xxxvii. 4.) The Lord sent his prophets to this people; and they so earnestly, and fully, and perseveringly declared to them the Divine intentions in their coming deliverance, and the great purposes of grace with which they were identified, that these matters became at length the subjects of conversation and concern, and ultimately led the Hebrews to associate and unite in plans and efforts in accordance with the will of God. Thus "bone came to his bone," until, by the proclamation of Cyrus, and the gracious providence of God, they went forth from Babylon, reached Judea, and again appeared before the world as a united and separate people.

It does not make any part of our plan to detail the various successive steps by which the Hebrew state was reconstructed; but it is necessary that we form some definite idea of their religious condition when restored to their own land.

Although our information on this important subject is very limited, one fact is sufficiently evident; namely, that the Hebrew population at this time presented the same great distinctive features which seem to have prevailed wherever the revealed will of God has been made known, and in any measure obeyed. There was, on the one hand, the general population, who, although professing to believe the truth, were nevertheless found to be, to a very sad extent, disobedient to its requirements; while living in social intercourse with these, but spiritually separated from them, a select company is found fearing God, and holding communion with one another as his people. The existence of this select class is thus recognised and divinely approved, in the language of Malachi: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Chap. iii. 16, 17.) These words not only show us that such special religious communion existed at this time, but also give us authoritatively the estimation in which it was regarded by Heaven. And how deeply expressive is this language! Not only is the Lord pleased to notice the pious intercourse of his humble followers: he bends his ear to catch every whisper, records the circumstance in a special book of remembrance, and pronounces the glorious judgment, "*They shall be mine.*" What can more clearly show the deep solicitude of Heaven in the salvation of men? What more clearly express the vast practical importance of the really religious intercourse of the pious?

Yet this was not the general condition of the people. The fearful complaints of the latter prophets, as to the impiety and immorality of all classes; the great and persevering efforts which Ezra and Nehemiah had to put forth to secure the reform of the most glaring abuses; together with the culpable backwardness which was evinced in regard to the completion of the temple; all show that the religion of the heart had a very slender hold even on those Hebrews who were favoured by Divine Providence with the means of reconstructing the Hebrew state.

It may be necessary here to observe, that, although the Hebrews were not only permitted, but encouraged, by the Persian monarchs to return to their own land, and to rebuild their cities and the temple, they were not restored to their inde-



pendence. Judea was still regarded as a province of the Persian empire, and, as such, subject to the government of the imperial power. It does not seem, however, that these sovereigns interfered in the internal economy of the Hebrews, but freely allowed them to observe their peculiar religious and social economy without molestation, whilst they afforded them from time to time protection and support.

The mode of government adopted in Judea after the restoration, undoubtedly tended to the detriment of spiritual religion. After Nehemiah, the high priest of the Jews for the time being was charged with the civil government of the country. If these men had possessed the piety and fidelity of the holy and zealous cup-bearer, this arrangement might have been a great blessing to the country; but, unfortunately, they were not men of his spirit. These ministers were not only generally worldly and unspiritual, but many of them very wicked men. The high priesthood, therefore, soon became an object of worldly ambition. It was, indeed, not more than fifteen years after the death of Nehemiah that Joiada, the high priest, fearing that his brother would supplant him in the sacred office, murdered him in the court of the temple; a crime which induced the Persian lieutenant of Syria, whose authority extended over Judea, to levy a tax on the sacrifices offered in the temple, in addition to a tribute which was now for the first time demanded from this Hebrew province. The tax on the sacrifices was remitted in the ensuing reign.

The Hebrews, however, were faithful to the Persian kings; and, consequently, when, after the battles of the Granicus and Issus, Alexander the Great laid siege to Tyre, knowing that this city derived its supplies of grain from the Hebrews, he sent to Jerusalem to demand provisions for his army. To this demand Jaddua the high priest replied, that he had sworn allegiance to Darius, and would not violate his oath while that sovereign was living. The haughty Macedonian, although greatly enraged, did not allow himself to be diverted from his purpose, but submitted to the inconvenience until he had taken and destroyed Tyre. Then, although he had determined to invest Gaza, he first proceeded to Jerusalem, to chastise the Jews for their refusal to supply him with provisions. This measure greatly alarmed the Hebrews; and the more so, because their old rivals, the Samaritans, had waited upon Alexander at Tyre, and submitted to his authority. Resistance was clearly in vain; and Josephus says, the course taken by the high priest was suggested to him in a dream. As the Macedonian

approached Jerusalem at the head of his army, Jaddua, who had previously caused the gates and streets of Jerusalem to be adorned, and special prayers and sacrifices to be offered to God for deliverance in this emergency, dressed in his pontifical garments, and followed by the priests in white attire, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem unarmed, went out to meet Alexander. The proud warrior, instead of reproaching or punishing the Jewish priest, as he seems to have intended, saluted him with profound veneration. Parmenio, the intimate friend of Alexander, ventured to ask him the meaning of this strange behaviour; when he replied, "I did not adore *him*, but *THAT GOD* who hath honoured him with his high priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this same habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia; who, when I was considering with myself, how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians. Whence it is, that, having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision, and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the Divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind." Having said this, the king again turned to the high priest, and saluted him, and placing him at his right hand, entered into the city in a friendly manner, and offered sacrifices to God in the temple. The high priest then showed Alexander the prophecies of Daniel, where it was stated that a Grecian king should overthrow the Persian empire; so that Alexander left the sanctuary with the greater assurance of entire success. Upon leaving the city, the Macedonian monarch called the principal Jews together, and inquired whether they had any request to make: they then petitioned to be allowed to live under their own civil and religious laws, and to be exempted from taxation every seventh year, when the land was not tilled. The king, having granted these petitions, departed from Jerusalem. This account, which comes to us on the authority of the Jewish antiquary and historian Josephus, is very important, as it shows that the meaning of the prophecies of Daniel were fully understood in that day, and that they were even made known to Alexander in the beginning of his wonderful career.

During the progress of the Macedonian conquests, the Jews enjoyed these privileges undisturbed. But when, after the

death of this conqueror, his dominions were divided between his generals, Judea was frequently exposed to great trouble. According to the first division of the provinces, Judea was attached to the government of Syria, over which Laomedon ruled. But Ptolemy Lagus, who had obtained the kingdom of Egypt as his portion, soon attached Syria and Phenicia to his dominions. The Hebrews, however, having sworn allegiance to Laomedon, refused to submit to Ptolemy; who, in consequence, laid siege to Jerusalem; and, perceiving that the Jews, from their reverence for the sabbath, did not appear in arms on that day, he assaulted the city on this holy day, and took possession of it without resistance. The ease with which he secured this conquest did not induce him to treat the Hebrews with lenity; for he transported nearly one hundred thousand of them into Egypt; which accounts for the vast numbers of these people being ever afterward found in that country.

The wars waged between the successors of Alexander proved very injurious to the Hebrew state. About eleven years after its subjection to Ptolemy, Judea was again wrested from the power of Egypt, and reunited to Syria: again, about ten years afterward, on the death of Antigonus, the Hebrew territory reverted to Egypt. During this period, however, the Syrian king, by ruling in the most tyrannical manner, so oppressed his Hebrew subjects, that it induced great multitudes of them to emigrate to the cities of Asia Minor, over which Seleucus ruled with a mild and tolerant sway. This is the reason why so many Hebrews were found in those cities in the time of the apostles.

A few years after the death of Antigonus, and the consequent transfer of Judea to Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus ascended the throne of that country. This period will always be memorable in the annals of the Hebrew nation, for the important events which then transpired. Just before the accession of this Egyptian king, Simon the Just held the office of high priest, and performed its duties in a satisfactory manner. His praise is celebrated in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, (chap. 1. 1—7,) as having greatly improved the city, and contributed to the stability of the Hebrew state. At his death he was succeeded in the high priesthood by his brother Eleazer. There was, however, another dignity which had been held by all the high priests that had preceded him from the time of the restoration, to which Eleazer was not appointed. This was the presidency of the great synagogue; an office which was now conferred on Antigonus of Soccho, a person celebrated in Jew-



ish history as the founder of the sect of the Sadducees ; a circumstance which seems to prove that about this time philosophizing and sceptical views on religious subjects obtained considerable currency among the Hebrews.

It was during the high priesthood of Eleazer, that Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, caused the Hebrew scriptures to be translated into Greek ; which version has ever since been known as the Septuagint, from its being the production of seventy translators. Strange tales are told of the wonderful circumstances which attended the accomplishment of this work ; but it is an undoubted fact, that the Old Testament was at this time rendered into Greek, which then, and for several centuries afterward, was known to the entire inhabitants of the most learned and civilized nations of the earth, and was read by the *literati* in all countries, from Rome to India. The rendering of the Hebrew scriptures into this language at this juncture, was the most effectual means which could have been taken to disseminate a knowledge of their sacred contents throughout the earth.

Judea continued subject to Egypt from the death of Antigonus for nearly one hundred years ; when, about 200 B.C., by one of those oscillations of national power so common in every age, it reverted again to the dominion of Syria. Antiochus, commonly called "the Great," who effected this change, treated the Hebrews with kindness, as did his successor Seleucus ; but Antiochus Epiphanes, the next king of Syria, bitterly persecuted the pious Jews. It must, however, be confessed, that this was mainly occasioned by the generally demoralised state of the Hebrew priesthood and people. Soon after the accession of this king, Jason, a brother of the high priest, proceeded to Antiochus, and offered him a much larger sum as tribute from the Hebrew province than had been previously paid, if he would appoint him high priest instead of his brother. The king, being at this time in want of money, on account of the demands which were made on him by the Romans, consented : the pious and venerable Onias, who then held this sacred office, was deposed and banished, and Jason invested with the high priesthood. Such venal conduct in the religious and civil head of the Hebrew people, too clearly indicated the state of religion and morals generally among the people. But the spirit and conduct of Jason, during his government, were even worse than this evil opening of his career. He gave further sums to Antiochus, for leave to erect a gymnasium at Jerusalem for the teaching and celebration of Grecian games. He also opened an academy for teaching the sciences after the man-

ner of Greece, and endeavoured in every possible way to break down the distinction between the Hebrews and Heathens. This, indeed, was done by these means, beyond what may appear to us at the present moment; as may be seen in the facts, that in these games the combatants appeared naked, and that Jason actually sent Jews to Tyre to contend in games celebrated in honour of Hercules, and to present a votive offering to the god.

Such direct apostasy from God met the punishment which it deserved. Jason sent his younger brother Onias (who, in conformity with the notions which then prevailed, had given his name the Greek form of Menelaus) to pay the promised tribute to the king of Syria. Menelaus availed himself of this opportunity of acting precisely as Jason himself had done. He outbid his brother's offer for the high priesthood; and, consequently, Jason was expelled, and Menelaus, still more vile in his character, was, by force of arms, installed into the sacred office. To make the excessive payments which he had promised, this wicked pontiff robbed the temple of its golden vessels, and thus secured a continuance of the king's favour. These measures, however, created the greatest indignation and disgust, which led to some disorder and disturbance, and finally to a formal complaint, which was preferred against the high priest by the Jewish sanhedrim. Menelaus, however, by bribery, not only secured a judgment in his favour, but caused the messengers of the sanhedrim to be put to death. These measures filled Judea with deep and general discontent; and as Menelaus proceeded unchecked in his career of cruelty and iniquity under the protection of Syria, the Hebrews became impatient of subjection to that power: so that, when Antiochus had marched an army into Egypt, and a report was circulated that he was dead, some of the Jews showed signs of joy at the tidings; conduct which greatly enraged Antiochus, who returned, when the people attempted in vain to defend the city against him: it was taken by storm, and filled with carnage and slaughter. Not content with this, he was led by the apostate Menelaus into the temple, and even into the most holy place, where he defiled the sacred vessels, abstracted all the treasure, even removed the vail of the sanctuary, and appointed a person of great cruelty, named Philip, to be governor of the country.

These, however, were but the beginnings of sorrow to the oppressed Hebrews. Antiochus soon afterward proscribed the Hebrew religion, caused the temple to be dedicated to Jupiter Olympus; an image of this Heathen deity was set up on the

altar of God, and sacrifices offered before it ; circumcision was abolished on pain of death ; and Heathen altars reared in every city. These infamous measures were enforced with fiendish violence. Two mothers, who were detected in the act of circumcising, had their infants hung about their necks, and were, after being led through the city in this manner, thrown from the highest part of the city-walls and dashed to pieces. On another occasion a thousand men were found secretly convened together for the observance of the sabbath, and were all barbarously put to death. In fact, Antiochus was so enraged at the obstinacy with which the Jews resisted his will, that he came to Jerusalem in person to enforce his commands. Amongst the other savage enactments of this king, he enjoined the eating of swine's flesh by the Hebrews one day in every month. A venerable scribe, named Eleazer, ninety years old, on refusing to obey this command, was scourged to death. A mother and her seven sons also died in the most heroic manner for the same cause.

These atrocities, however, produced their usual results. When the officers of the king came to the small city of Modin, to compel the people to sacrifice to the Heathen gods, they sent for an aged priest, named Mattathias, the father of five sons, all distinguished by great bodily strength and nobility of mind, inviting him to bring his sons to the sacrifice, that their example might influence the multitude, and that he might thus be regarded as one of the king's friends. The noble-minded priest came, but boldly refused compliance with the king's command, declaring that, if he and his sons stood alone, they would remain faithful to God.

Whilst thus declaring his mind, he saw an apostate Hebrew approach the altar, to offer the required sacrifice. The sight roused the spirit of the priest into such a zeal for God, that he instantly inflicted on the culprit the punishment denounced against idolatry by Moses, by slaying him on the altar. He also killed the king's commissioner, and then passed through the city, calling on all who adhered to the law and the covenant to follow him. (1 Macc. ii. 27.) Thus begun what may be called the war of Hebrew independence ; and it is on every ground one of the most important on record. Starting, as we have seen, with no preparation or provision but their zeal for God, these noble men roused the Hebrew mind from its apathy ; and, after a series of desperate efforts, continued through twenty-five years, and after the father had died of old age, and four of the sons had perished, either on the field of battle or by treachery, Simon, the last remaining one, lived to see his country declared



independent, and himself recognised as high priest and prince of the Hebrews.

Of the future history of this people our notice may be very brief; for it can scarcely be regarded as a church, or even as containing a church, long after the death of the Maccabees. About eight years after independence had been secured, Simon was murdered by his son-in-law, who had been promised the government of the country by the king of Syria, as the reward of such unnatural villany. This hope, however, was defeated; for John Hyrcanus, the son of the aged Maccabean, evinced so much judgment and energy as secured to himself the government and high priesthood. His rule was generally successful. In one instance, however, it was calamitous, and terminated unhappily.

At this time the Pharisees and Sadducees had become influential and rival sects. John Hyrcanus had from his youth been connected with the former; but having been grossly insulted by one of them, and being exceedingly irritated that the rulers of the body did not punish the offender in a suitable manner, he entirely separated from them, and threw himself into the arms of the Sadducees, which occasioned a violent feud, producing the most disastrous consequences.

On the death of Hyrcanus, although he left four sons grown to men's estate, he bequeathed the government to his wife, a measure which produced the greatest confusion and distress. Notwithstanding this bequest, Aristobulus, a son of Hyrcanus, claimed the vacant dignity of high priest and prince; and, on his mother's refusing, he forcibly wrested the government from her, and caused her to be starved to death in prison. But the inhuman monster, after having perpetrated this enormity, and, under the influence of unfounded suspicions, put his brother Antigonus to death, soon after died, and was succeeded in the government by his brother Alexander, who became a great and successful warrior. It required a man of this character to rule in Judea at this period. Aristobulus had assumed the title and state of a king, and was followed in this assumption by Alexander, who was surnamed Janneus. In this reign the long-standing feud between the Pharisees and the royal family broke out into a civil war, which continued throughout six years. Alexander was succeeded by his wife, Queen Alexandra, who effected a reconciliation with the Pharisees, and made her eldest son Hyrcanus high priest. On the death of the queen, which occurred nine years afterward, the high priest ascended the throne under the title of Hyrcanus II. His brother

Aristobulus, however, a daring and energetic prince, raised the standard of revolt against him, and succeeded in obtaining the government under the title of Aristobulus II. Shortly before this, the Idumeans and Itureans had been subdued by the Hebrew princes; and, being offered the alternative of leaving their country, or conforming to the Hebrew faith, they chose the latter, and in future became blended with the Jews.

It now becomes necessary to notice a very remarkable individual of the former of these nations. Antipater, an Idumean proselyte, a man of great vigour and capacity, had been governor of his native land under Alexander Janneus, and was continued in the same office under Queen Alexandra. Being influenced by an unbounded ambition, he carefully watched all the inflexions of position occupied by the different members of the royal family, with a view to take that course which would most effectually promote his own ends. In the successful usurpation of Aristobulus, he found such an opportunity as he desired. Perceiving the sluggish character and limited capacity of Hyrcanus, and his legitimate claim to the throne, Antipater immediately espoused his cause, and with equal cunning and spirit roused the country in his behalf. A battle ensued, in which Aristobulus was defeated and driven into Jerusalem. It happened, at this juncture, that Pompey, the Roman triumvir, was near Judea at the head of a large army; and as Rome was at this time paramount in power, the two brothers referred their case to his arbitrement. The Roman heard the cause, but delayed his judgment; on which Aristobulus prepared to defend himself to the utmost. This conduct issued in the Roman army taking Jerusalem by assault, when twelve thousand Jews were slain. Pompey then appointed Hyrcanus high priest and governor, with the title of prince. On attaining this dignity, Hyrcanus soon relapsed into his natural sluggishness, leaving to Antipater the burden of the government; and it is not easy to overrate the difficulty of this task. Judea and the surrounding countries were at this time in a state of the greatest disorder, and it required consummate judgment and spirit to hold the reins of government. The main principle of the Idumean's policy was to secure the favour of the Romans, and, through them, to mount to power. With this view he successively aided Pompey, Scipio, Anthony, and Cæsar. In these efforts he was seconded, with a daring and prudence like his own, by his son Herod, whom he made governor of Galilee. The important aid which Antipater rendered Julius Cæsar in Egypt, induced that conqueror to make him procurator of Judea; so



that at length he secured the title as well as the possession of power. About this time the Parthians invaded Judea, and Antipater was poisoned. Herod, however, fled to Rome, where he was kindly received by Antony and Octavius, who recounted the deeds of his father in the service of Rome, and caused the senate solemnly to elect and inaugurate Herod to the throne of Judea. He accordingly returned to that country, found that the Parthians had been driven out of Syria, and, after a long and obstinate struggle, with the aid of Roman influence and arms, brought the whole country under his government.

But Herod was as wicked and cruel as he was talented and brave. He well knew that the Jews greatly disliked both his father and himself: this, in fact, was the reason why the Asmonean imbecile was continued so long nominally on the throne, and why the people so eagerly favoured any rival that arose to dispute possession of power with Herod. Having, therefore, now grasped the object of his ambition, he formed the savage determination to cut off all the descendants of the Maccabean family. And he appears to have carried his bloody purpose into execution: even his wife, the beautiful Mariamne, although the mother of two of his sons, perished on the scaffold by the order of her unnatural husband. It was this king who reigned when Christ was born. We need not wonder, therefore, at the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem: that was, indeed, an ordinary act for Herod.

It has been necessary to give this rapid sketch of Jewish history, that you may be able to understand the state of the country and of its government at the time when the apostles preached and the church of Christ was founded.

It will only be necessary, in this address, to add some information respecting the doctrines believed, and the measure of real religion experienced, by the Jews during that period of their history, and also respecting those religious sects which obtained in Judea at that time.

The first and most important question which can arise respecting the religion of this people, concerns the views which were entertained of the Divine nature, and the promised Messiah.

That the early patriarchs knew of a plurality of persons in the Divine nature, and of the number being limited to three, has been already proved. These views were fully inherited by the Jews at the time now under consideration. Much confusion and contradiction is found to exist in the statements of the most eminent authors, as to the extent to which the



doctrine of the Trinity was apprehended, and the time when it was most clearly understood, and the means by which this superior clearness of view was attained. Our limits will not allow a critical investigation of these points: we shall therefore satisfy ourselves with affirming, that, whilst the general notion which prevailed amongst the Hebrew public on this subject is already indicated, the superior illumination which some persons experienced did not arise from any thing peculiar to the time in which they lived, or special in the means with which they were favoured, but through the fervour of their individual piety and the strength of their faith. Why did Abraham see the day of Christ so clearly as to be filled with gladness at the prospect? Certainly because he believed God and wrought righteousness. And, consequently, at the very same time men, having the same external advantages, and entertaining precisely the same elements of belief, such being regarded as articles of a creed, would, nevertheless, have clearness or obscurity of vision accordingly as they were faithful and obedient, or unbelieving and sinful.

But how did these views of the Divine Nature affect the expectations of the Jews respecting the Messiah? One eminent scholar has laboured to show that they fully believed and expected that the Messiah would be the same as the Divine Word. But his proof goes no farther than that they had, from the scriptures, ample reasons for coming to that conclusion. To this extent we are willing to receive his views. The ancient Hebrews certainly had ample reason for believing that the promised Messiah would be the Word of God, and hence truly Divine; but it is equally clear that, for centuries before the birth of Christ, they did not believe this. On the contrary, while they believed in a Triune Deity, with more or less of distinctness of vision, they believed the Messiah would be only a man,—the son of David. Hence, when Jesus asked, “How then is he David’s Lord?” they could not tell. If they had had any notion of Messiah’s Divinity, the answer to this inquiry would have been easy and natural. As a proof of this, numerous passages might be quoted from the Targums, in which the Messiah and the Divine Word are distinctly spoken of as two separate persons. The most satisfactory evidence, however, on this point is found in the gospel history. Jesus was frequently recognised as the Messiah, and, as such, called the “Son of David.” (Matt. xx. 30, 31; Mark x. 47; Matt. xv. 22; xxi. 9, 15.) Indeed, so strong and general was this impression, that the people were about to “come and take him by force, to make him a king.” (John vii. 15.) But when Jesus declared

his pre-existence to Abraham, and his consequent Divinity, the people broke out into open violence, and prepared to inflict on him the punishment of a blasphemer. (John viii. 39.) Indeed, Christ was condemned to die, not for claiming to be the Messiah, but for avowing himself to be the Son of God. When charged with being a King, he admitted it; (Luke xxiii. 1—3;) but this did not secure his condemnation. Nothing availed for this purpose, until it was said, "*We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the SON OF GOD.*" (John xix. 7.)

If it be asked, "How then did the Jews expect such a glorious renovation and exaltation from a human Messiah?" the answer is, that they undoubtedly expected the Messiah to be a man, a human prophet and human sovereign only; but then they believed that in his days the Divine Word would return to Israel again, as the visible, glorious Shekinah. It must be observed, that they regarded the prophecy of Haggai literally, as explicitly teaching this: "I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former." (Haggai ii. 7, 9.) They looked to the Messiah, therefore, as the great ruler and teacher, and to this more glorious revelation of the Divine Word, as the author of spiritual light and blessing; and as the great Mediator between God and man. Christ was, in consequence, rejected, because he claimed a union of both in his own person.

As to the worship of the Jews, it consisted of two parts,—the temple and the synagogue. The services of the first were, toward the close of the period we have under consideration, conducted with regularity and splendour, although it is to be feared that their typical and spiritual import and object were very generally disregarded. Those Jews who, with any earnestness, clung to the faith of their dispensation, worshipped in the synagogue. This chiefly consisted of reading the scriptures, prayer, and preaching. The Old Testament was divided into sections, so that there might be one for each sabbath; prayers to God were offered up; and discourses, explanatory, hortatory, and practical, based on the text of scripture, were regularly delivered. There appears to have been persons specially appointed to this duty; but it was not confined to them, as devout Hebrews of every tribe were quite at liberty to preach in the synagogues. These places of worship were very numerous: not only did they exist in all the provincial towns, but it is said that at the time of Christ there were more than four hundred in Jerusalem alone.

We now briefly notice the religious sects which obtained amongst the Hebrews. The principal of these was the Pharisees. This name comes from a word which signifies "separation," and was taken, because the sect claimed to be separated or distinguished from the general body of the Hebrews by a clear knowledge of the law, and by a more entire obedience to its requirements. We do not hear of any sects among the Jews until after the restoration. Prior to the captivity they were one people, isolated by their manners and usages from all others. But subsequently, being brought under external influences, a disposition grew up in many minds to modify and adulterate the institutions and doctrines of Moses. This, in all probability, led to the formation of the sect of the Pharisees. Zealous for the law in all its most minute details, they studied it with intense care, conformed their practice to its letter, and gloried in this knowledge and practice as the substance of religion, although negligent of weightier matters of spiritual and holy importance.

The Sadducees were the sceptical philosophers of the day: denying the existence of angel or spirit, and the doctrine of the resurrection, they reduced their religion to a dry system of morals.

Besides these, there existed another Jewish sect, (although it is not noticed in the scriptures,) called the Essenes. These are supposed to have arisen out of an attempt to reform the Pharisees. Their prominent doctrine was absolute predestination; besides which, they observed the sabbath with great strictness, and highly revered the scriptures, but considered them as mystic writings, and expounded them allegorically. But they were most remarkable for their practices. They were ascetics. They despised marriage, keeping up their numbers by adopting the children of others. Riches, also, they held in contempt; they had all things in common; and they regarded all employments unlawful but those of agriculture. This sect was never numerous, and was chiefly located on the banks of the Dead Sea.

With regard to the most vital element of real religion, the work of grace in the human heart, the prospect of this period is very gloomy. It is true, the Hebrew scriptures taught repentance, faith, and holiness; but it is equally true, that Christ said, "Ye have made the commandment of God of *none effect* by your tradition." The religion of the Pharisees may be read in the prayer of one of them, which our Redeemer has given. In fact, it seems as if a proud reliance on antique



forms, ceremonies, and external rites, an equally proud philosophic scepticism, and an extravagant and unnatural asceticism, united to form the staple of the Jews' religion in the time of our Saviour.

We must not, however, forget that there were individual exceptions to this. The venerable Simeon, the devout Anna, Zacharias, Elisabeth, Mary, and Joseph were certainly truly pious; and the light and power of the Holy Spirit sometimes were seen and obeyed even by the lowest of the Hebrew race, as we perceive in the case of the justified publican. But these were exceptions to the general practice.

## LECTURE X.

### THE FORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, AND ITS PROGRESS TO THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE.

THE FULFILMENT OF SACRED PROPHECY HAD RAISED A GENERAL EXPECTATION OF THE MESSIAH'S COMING—This strengthened by the remarkable Life and Death of Jesus Christ—THE PENTECOST—Success of a preached Gospel—General Aim of the Apostles—They did not assume to be Priests, nor to perform priestly Acts—The Apostles followed the Order of the Synagogues—Sketch of this Order and Arrangement—The Success of the Gospel occasioned a bloody Persecution—Which dispersed the Christians—The Religion and religious Usages of the Nations in which the Christians found Refuge—General Prevalence of Toleration and Greek Manners in those Countries—Success of the Gospel in Samaria—CONVERSION OF SAUL—The Persecution in Judea stayed—Probable Cause of this—THE SALVATION OF THE GOSPEL MADE KNOWN TO GENTILES—The Gospel successful at Antioch—Martyrdom of James—Miraculous Deliverance of Peter—Missionary Tour of Paul and Barnabas—The deliberative Church-Meeting at Jerusalem, and its Decision—Paul's early ministerial Career—Chronological Account of Paul's future Labours—LIVES AND LABOURS OF THE OTHER APOSTLES—Peter—Andrew—James—John—Philip—Bartholomew—Matthew—Thomas—James the Less—Simon—Jude—Success of apostolic Labours—Imperfect spiritual Condition of Asiatic Churches—Ruin of Jerusalem—Progress of the Church—FIRST GENERAL PERSECUTION UNDER NERO—Interval of Peace—SECOND PERSECUTION UNDER DOMITIAN—End of the FIRST CENTURY—Heresies which had been introduced—Ecclesiastical and theological Writers of the SECOND CENTURY—Christian Doctrine of this Age—Unauthorised Innovations—Usages and Mode of Worship—Church Government—Heresies and Persecutions in this Century—Literary Attacks on, and Defences of, the Cause of Christ—THE THIRD CENTURY—The State of the Christian Cause—Eminent Fathers and Authors of this Age—Zeal for the Extension of Christianity—Purity of Doctrine still maintained—Laxity of Language employed—Superstitious Innovations—General Character of Christian Society—Heresies—Persecutions—Attack of Porphyry on the Cause of Christ—Condition of Christianity at the End of the third Century—PERSECUTION OF DIOCLETIAN—ACCESSION OF CONSTANTINE.

HAVING thus far detailed the progress of religion among the Hebrews, under the Old-Testament dispensation, we have now to consider the full and glorious developement of the economy of grace.

In the revolving cycles of human history, the varied predictions of inspired prophecy having been fulfilled, the Son of God became

incarnated among men. Jesus lived, and taught, displayed his boundless benevolence and almighty power, died as an expiatory sacrifice for sin, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. All these wonderful dispensations of Divine Love are so fully narrated in the Gospels, that we make no further reference to them here.

It is, however, necessary to observe, that the numerous and precise predictions which had announced the coming of Messiah had been so manifestly fulfilled in the successive dominion of the four great empires, the expiration of the seventy weeks or four hundred and ninety years from the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and other events, that a very strong and general expectation pervaded not only Judea, but other countries also, that a wondrous person was just then about to appear in the world to rear up a new and universal dominion among men. In Judea this expectation had assumed a more distinct form, and the long-promised Messiah was, according to the views entertained respecting him, earnestly looked for.

The marvellous circumstances which marked the life of Jesus Christ, and accompanied his death, tended rather to increase than to allay this expectation. In all probability, it was to this cause mainly, that, at the Pentecost which followed the ascension of the Saviour, "there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." (Acts ii. 5.)

It was on this occasion, and when the disciples of Jesus were assembled in a religious meeting, that the "promise of the Spirit" was given which called into existence the Christian church in its true and proper character. Nothing more fully proves the presence of heavenly power than the circumstances which accompanied this miracle of mercy. The disciples were worshipping in their own upper room, secluded from observation, even though the city was full of people, when the Holy Ghost, with the sound of a rushing mighty wind, filled the place where they were sitting, and, resting on each in the visible shape of tongues of fire, filled them all with heavenly power and unction, enabling them to speak, with miraculous ease and facility, languages which before were entirely unknown to them.

The strange results of this wonderful effusion were soon noticed by those in the immediate vicinity, and thence noised abroad, until a crowd of strangers and native Jews came together, to witness this marvellous work. When thus assembled, they were filled with astonishment; for every man heard the gospel announced in his mother tongue. There was no excep-



tion to this, although some present had come from Parthia in the extreme east, others from Rome in the west; from all the intermediate countries and the nations bordering the Mediterranean on the north, the east, and south; and every man heard in his own language the wonderful declaration of redeeming mercy in Christ Jesus.

The form in which the baptizing flame appeared on this occasion, although remarkably significant, seems generally to have escaped observation. If it had been the Divine purpose to make symbolic agency, or sacramental efficacy, the great means of converting the world, as it has been so often and so confidently asserted in modern times, this occasion afforded the best possible opportunity of impressing indubitably the Divine sanction on such means. But this was not done: we hear nothing of a glorious luminous cross, or of sacramental symbols; but we are told of "cloven tongues, like as of fire," which rested on each of the disciples. Is there no meaning in this? Is the interpretation of such a sign, on such an occasion, difficult? Does it not clearly show, that the grand agency appointed by God for the conversion of a fallen world, is the sanctified speech of the disciples of Christ? Yes, my brethren, this is the legitimate means for diffusing the gospel. "Go—disciple all nations, teaching them"—*teaching them* the words of truth imbued with the fire of the Holy Spirit; and delivered under his immediate influence.

By this agency the church was formed. When the people "heard" the words of Peter, and of the other speakers, "they were pricked in their heart," and "three thousand souls" were that day added unto the disciples, as the first-fruits of gospel preaching under the full influence of the promised "power from on high." Every added day increased the number, until in a short time a great many, even "of the priests, believed," and "multitudes both of men and women were added to the Lord." We do not perceive, either at this period or even during the life of the apostles, any indications of effort on their part to give any particular organization or government to the church. Their great object appears from the beginning to have been, to inculcate "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" (Acts xx. 21;) and thus to introduce all who would hear their word into the glorious privileges of the kingdom of God. In a word, the first preachers of the gospel aimed at personal salvation, and then taught those converted through their ministry, to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith" they were "called."

It is, however, very clear that, in doing this, they must have adopted some common rule or course of action; and the question naturally rises in the mind of a youthful inquirer after truth, What rule or model did the apostles and their fellow-labourers adopt in respect to their course of ministerial action? Did they then—as those who claim to be their successors in an eminent, and indeed exclusive, manner, do now; namely, claim to be a Christian priesthood—pretend to offer an unbloody sacrifice, and copy in their general arrangements the names, usages, and manners of the temple? This is a most important question. You will scarcely be disposed to admit that doctrines, practices, and usages deserve to be called apostolic now, which are not only destitute of any countenance from apostolic practice, but which are directly opposed to all that the apostles said and did.

Not only did the apostles, and the other preachers of the gospel in their day, never assume to be priests, to offer a sacrifice, or to be entitled to act in any manner analogous to the manners which obtained in the temple; it was clearly impossible that they could do so. The temple was still standing, its ministrations were duly, and even gorgeously, performed. The morning and evening sacrifice continued to be offered, and none more devoutly took part in the services of the Lord's house than the Christian converts. It is impossible, therefore, that the apostles could have regarded themselves as called to step into the position of the Levitical priesthood,—that position was not vacant; and Christianity in apostolic times could not therefore have been invested with those forms, names, and powers, which those now claiming to be eminently apostolic are so eager to assume.

But the question still remains to be settled. As the apostles could not have pursued their course of public action on the model of temple-institutions, did they adopt any other model, or mark out an entirely new course of their own? The answer to this is easy. They do not appear, as of set purpose, to have adopted any code of regulations or mode of organization for their guidance; nor was there any necessity for this. There existed in the service and institutions of the synagogue every thing which the case required. This service, as was shown in the preceding lecture, arose out of a strong and earnest desire of the devout Hebrews to obtain a closer and more intimate intercourse with God, than they could have by the instrumentality of their priests in the services of the temple. This was secured by David in the worship appointed in his tabernacle,

and perpetuated to the Hebrew people by the services of the synagogue. This means continued, notwithstanding the spiritual declension of the Jews, to be the centre and rallying-point of all that was serious, devout, and spiritual among them. Here our Saviour commenced his ministerial career, and continued his teaching to the end of his earthly course. (Matt. ix. 35 ; xii. 9—14 ; xiii. 54—58 ; Mark i. 21—31, 39 ; vi. 1—6 ; Luke iv. 14—30, 33—39, 44 ; xiii. 10 ; John vi. 59—71.) As the disciples of Christ had seen the miracles of their Master, and heard sermons in the synagogues during the whole course of his ministry, we need not wonder that they followed his example, and, whenever opportunity offered, proclaimed the truth of Christ in these Hebrew sanctuaries. It does not appear that this was done in Jerusalem until some time after the day of Pentecost. The violent animosity of the Jews probably rendered it impracticable. It is, indeed, a notable fact, that Paul is the first of the apostles whom we find daring to stem the torrent of Hebrew prejudice by preaching Christ in their synagogues ; (Acts ix. 20 ;) a practice, however, which soon afterward became common.

As the usages of the synagogue exercised an important influence on the formation of the church, it is necessary to give some information respecting the order and worship observed in these sanctuaries. Here the devout Israelites assembled on all sabbath and festival days, and, according to some authors, on two other days every week. The women sat apart from the men. The first part of this worship consisted in reading the scriptures. For this purpose the Book of the Law was divided into sections, so that it could be read regularly through in the course of every year. Portions were also selected from the prophets, which were also read. This reading being finished, the people engaged in prayer to God. Then followed the sermon, or religious discourse. This consisted mainly of scripture exposition, and was always delivered by the preacher in a sitting posture. This is, indeed, the Oriental manner of address. In India at the present moment a man may stand erect in a prominent position, but no one will wait, every person passes on. Let him, however, sit down, although it be in the highway or at the corner of a street, and the position will be understood as a public announcement that he has some important communication to make, and he will soon have a congregation. It was so in Palestine. Accordingly, when our Saviour, after having read the selected portion from the prophets in the synagogue of Nazareth, of which he was a member, instead of



returning to his place, "sat down," "the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him," knowing, from the posture he had taken, that he was about to preach to them. (Luke iv. 20.) So when Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue at Antioch, and "sat down," thereby intimating their desire to speak to the people, the rulers of the synagogue sent and gave them leave. (Acts xiii. 14, 15.)

For insuring the regular observance of order in these sacred places, a complete body of officers were appointed. The first of these was called the "ruler," and sometimes the "chief ruler," of the synagogue. He had the direction of all its affairs. He presided over the arrangements for conducting public worship. If persons whom he judged eligible offered themselves, he gave them leave to preach; and in case none voluntarily offered, he invited readers and speakers to perform that duty. Next in order to him was a class of officers called elders or *presbyters*: they were a kind of council, which formed a governing body under the presidency of the chief ruler. In the next place, we find *the angel of the church*. It was his chief duty to offer up public prayer to God. He seems to have received this title because he was a recognised medium of their communications to God. Then came the minister, who handed the books to those who read: he was responsible for the cleanliness, decency, and order of the place; he opened and closed it, and had it generally under his care. In many of the synagogues there were, in addition to these, deacons or almoners. In most of the synagogues there were two boxes, one to receive gifts for the poor of that synagogue, and the other for poor strangers. The deacons had the charge of these donations, and superintended their appropriation.

Although, as we have already observed, the apostles did not in set form adopt any particular organization for the Christian church, yet it is abundantly evident that, as occasions offered, they proceeded on the model of the synagogue. When the need arose, they appointed deacons, similar in name and office to those in the synagogues. The ministers were charged with the principal direction of affairs under the title of "elders" or "presbyters;" and when these became numerous, one of them was appointed to be the superintendent, overseer, or bishop of the rest. And with these agents the church progressed in numbers and spiritual power.

It is, of course, admitted that the ministrations of the apostles and their coadjutors were not confined to the synagogues: they availed themselves of every means of disseminating

the knowledge of Christ, and of strengthening believers in the faith. Hence we find them constantly "breaking bread from house to house," (Acts ii. 46,) and "teaching in every house." (Acts v. 42.) These means were crowned with the Divine blessing, until "the number of the disciples" was "multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." (Acts vi. 7.) This continued success so provoked the unbelieving Jews, that they at length broke out into open violence, murdered Stephen, and commenced a general and furious persecution of the Christian cause in the Hebrew capital and throughout Judea; in which Saul of Tarsus was particularly active and prominent.

Before proceeding to relate the dispersion of the Christians, which was occasioned by this persecution, and its results in the wide diffusion of the Christian faith, it will be necessary to notice the religion and religious usages of those Gentile nations which were contiguous to Judea, and in which the dispersed disciples took refuge from the sanguinary intolerance of the Jews.

Nor will this be a tedious task. For, widely different as were the primitive religions of Egypt, Asia, Syria, Greece, and Rome, they had all at this time been so imbued with the language, manners, learning, and arts of Greece, that for all practical purposes the habits and religion of all these countries were Grecian. How, then, did these religious opinions and customs affect the introduction of the religious doctrines and practices inculcated by the faith of Christ? The answer is, certainly, that, on the whole, they operated favourably. There was in Greece, in the days of her political power, no small measure of religious intolerance. Socrates, as is well known, was put to death for claiming to be divinely called to lead his countrymen to virtue; Anaxagoras was banished for asserting the materialism of the heavens; and Stilpho had a similar fate, by a decree of the Areopagus, for denying the divinity of the statue of Minerva. But at the time when the gospel was introduced, the political power of Greece had passed away; and all-powerful Rome ruled over the nations from the remote east, to Britain in the west. It is also worthy of remark, that Rome, which had also been to a considerable extent narrow and intolerant whilst occupying a merely national position, on attaining universal empire seemed to act as if, with the power to rule over all nations, she had obtained possession of the whole pantheon of Heathendom. For, as Rome did not interfere with the religion of any country which owned the supremacy of her government; so, when these subject nations became provinces of the imperial

empire, their deities were enrolled amongst the gods of Rome ; and, consequently, general toleration prevailed.

Whilst, therefore, the prevalence of this universal power insured toleration, except in so far as it might be affected by local prejudice or excitement, the religious usages and manners which had been disseminated from Greece, and which at this time widely obtained, afforded the preachers of the gospel important means of circulating far and wide the doctrines of salvation. The several schools of philosophy in Greece were as analogous to our religious denominations, as it is possible for any such things to be in countries so very dissimilar in manners and institutions. The great subjects discussed by the sages of Greece in their philosophical schools, and by their philosophers in their discourses, were the Divine Nature and its manifestations, man, virtue, morals, and the existence or non-existence of a future life. All these discourses, therefore, were a kind of preaching, which laid down a precedent for the practice of the apostles, and prepared the public mind for the reception of their sermons.

In these circumstances, on the death of Stephen and the persecution that followed, the dispersed Christians, although fleeing for their life to distant lands, neither forgot nor neglected their duty to the cause of their Master, but “ went every where preaching the word.” (Acts viii. 4.) The first success of which we hear beyond the limits of Judea, was at Samaria. Philip, one of the deacons, having gone there, began to preach ; great and numerous miracles attended his word, so that many were converted and baptized, both men and women. The apostles at Jerusalem, having heard of this success, sent Peter and John to Samaria, and under their ministry the work of grace was still further carried on. One instance of some consequence may be noticed here. We are told that these apostles “ preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans ;” (Acts viii. 25 ;) which shows with what avidity these men of God prosecuted their Master’s work, and afforded an apostolic precedent for their followers in all future time of going into the cottages of the poor, and even into the highways, to call sinners to repentance.

After the apostles had returned to Jerusalem, Philip was led away into the desert, and was made instrumental in leading a Jewish proselyte, a man high in authority under the queen of Ethiopia, to an experience of faith in Christ. The conversion of this man was, my dear brethren, a striking illustration of the doctrines with which you are familiar, and which so many at



the present day violently oppose : it was by faith in Christ,—instantaneous and conscious,—resulting in great joy.

These events were followed by another triumph of Christianity, still more signal in its character, and more important in its results. This was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the virulent and sanguinary persecutor of the saints. As he was proceeding to Damascus on his evil errand, he was arrested, when near that city, by a glorious revelation of the Saviour, who called him from his unholy purpose to a new and better life. No sooner had his mighty and energetic mind become acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus, than he at once boldly proclaimed it in the synagogues of Damascus, affirming of Christ “that he is the Son of God.” (Acts ix. 20.) Saul did not, however, immediately receive his commission to evangelize the Gentiles ; but, after preaching in the synagogues at Damascus, until the Jews were so enraged that they went about to kill him, he retired to Tarsus, where, as a Roman citizen, he could live in safety.

At this point of the history we are informed that the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had rest, and were multiplied. (Acts ix. 31.) It immediately occurs to the thoughtful reader to ask, What stayed the furious persecution of the Jews, at such an important juncture to the infant cause of Christian truth ? We are not prepared with a distinct answer to this question. But we can state some circumstances which occurred about this time, and which would be very likely to produce this result.

Tiberius Cæsar died A.D. 37, about two years after the conversion of Saul, and was succeeded in the empire of Rome by Caligula, a man infamous for the most unbounded cruelty. It happened about the time of the accession of this sovereign, that the Roman governor of Egypt had much reason to fear the anger of the new emperor : the Egyptians saw it, and took the opportunity of affording him their earnest support on condition of his exerting himself to discourage the Jews of Alexandria, of whom they were exceedingly jealous. When, therefore, they, as a large and important portion of the subjects of Rome in Egypt, prepared an address to the new emperor, and handed it to the governor to be sent by him to Rome, he suppressed the document. Caligula was, in consequence of the apparent neglect of the Jews, very angry with them, and not only treated those of Egypt with great cruelty, but actually sent a statue of himself, with the name of Jupiter inscribed on it, to Judea, with orders that it was to be set up in the most holy place of the temple. This measure threw the Jewish people

into a state of the utmost distraction and dismay. The whole country was moved, and, by the most urgent and humiliating supplications, they succeeded in delaying the execution of the command, until the death of Caligula caused the project to be laid aside.

It is very likely that this national calamity drew off the attention of the Jewish rulers from the disciples of Christ, and gave the churches the rest of which we read in the text quoted above.

Hitherto, although the gospel had spread with great rapidity and power, it was limited in operation to the Jews and Jewish proselytes. It is a fact worthy of notice, that six years from the day of Pentecost elapsed before the promulgation of the gospel to the Gentiles. So marked was the mercy of God to his ancient people, so great the love of Christ to his murderers, that, throughout this long season, the Hebrews alone seemed to have been the subjects of the mission of the Saviour. By this means the knowledge of Christ was circulated among a people holding the Old-Testament scriptures in the most profound veneration, and a platform was laid for the promulgation of the gospel, in strict accordance with the teaching of revealed truth, and under the guidance at the same time of the Holy Spirit, and of an intelligent apprehension of the general economy of grace.

But now the mercy of God was made known to the Gentiles. The first person whose case was met in this extraordinary way was Cornelius, a centurion in the Roman army, dwelling at Cæsarea. By a vision the Lord instructed him to send messengers to Joppa to seek Simon Peter, and by similar means Peter was taught to comply with his request. The result was, that, on the apostle preaching Christ to this devout Gentile, his family, and friends, they believed, and the Holy Ghost fell on them; and thus the miracles and glories of the day of Pentecost were repeated in respect of these converts, who were straightway baptized in the name of the Lord. It is observable that in this instance the gift of the Holy Ghost preceded baptism. This fact, therefore, completely refutes the notions of those who make the gift of the Spirit entirely dependent on the rite, whilst it equally rebukes those who esteem the rite unnecessary, seeing an apostle commanded it to be administered even after the Holy Ghost had been given.

The gospel had been so long confined in its operation to the Hebrew people, that the church at Jerusalem were not prepared for the conduct pursued by Peter in reference to Cornelius and

his friends. So, on his return to the Hebrew capital, they contended with him on account of his having held intercourse with uncircumcised men. How full of instruction of the highest kind is the simple narrative of these events! Some men now tell us, that Peter had received from Christ power to rule in the church; and a man to this day claims spiritual supremacy over the whole world as his successor. How very far the apostles and brethren of the really primitive church were from entertaining these notions, the sacred narrative will show. When Peter contravened their views, they supposed him to have done wrong, and contended with him. Nor did the aged apostle meet their complaint with any assumption of power, or claim of right: he reasoned with them, and convinced them, that the work was of God; whilst those who had complained, candidly admitted their error, and glorified God for this wonderful developement of his grace.

Further successes soon crowned the ministrations of the gospel in many places. One of the principal of these was at Antioch. Some of those who had been scattered abroad on the death of Stephen had gone to this city, and other places in the same direction. And here, especially, the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great multitude of persons "believed and turned unto the Lord." When this was made known to the church at Jerusalem, they sent forth Barnabas to strengthen the hands of those engaged in this great work. On his arrival at Antioch, he was surprised and delighted at the depth and extent of the work; and, finding it still increasing under his own ministrations, he went to Tarsus for Saul, and returned with him to Antioch, where their united labours were greatly blessed. It was here that the disciples were first called Christians. From the manner in which the giving of this appellation is recorded, it would seem that it was employed by distinct command, as by revelation from heaven.

At this time a great dearth occurred; and it being known to the brethren of Antioch, that the Christians at Jerusalem were, on this account, and by reason of their former severe persecution, in great distress, each one contributed according to his ability; and their aggregate benefactions were sent to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, who went up to the capital for this purpose, after having laboured at Antioch for a whole year. Paul takes no notice of this visit: he appears to have returned almost immediately to the scene of his labour.

At this time the flame of persecution was again kindled at Jerusalem. Herod Agrippa, who now reigned in Judea, finding



the feeling of the Jewish rulers strongly opposed to the Christian cause, and anxious to stand well with them, proceeded to wreak his vengeance on the leaders of this pious and unoffending community. James the apostle fell by the sword, the first victim to this cruel policy; and the king, finding this murder very gratifying to the Jews, proceeded to extend his cruelty by casting Peter into prison, intending to put him also to death.

This malignant purpose was, however, defeated by a most remarkable miracle. Alarmed at these measures, and dreading the loss of their best leaders, many of the Christians met together on the night previous to the intended execution of Peter, and continued instant in prayer to God on his behalf. Whilst they were thus engaged, the Lord sent his angel, who delivered the apostle from prison; so that, whilst the pious few were still beseeching heaven on his behalf, Peter stood knocking at the gate of the house in which they were assembled. Having been admitted by his astonished and delighted friends, he departed to a place of safety. In the morning, great was the consternation of the king and of his court, when they found that the prisoner was gone, although the prison was found safely locked, and every guard at his post.

Paul and Barnabas, having returned to Antioch, continued to labour there in conjunction with Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen; and whilst thus engaged, the Holy Ghost commanded the others to separate Barnabas and Paul "for the work whereunto" he had "called them." Some have supposed that this separation was a call to the apostleship; and it is remarkable, that, although the term is not previously applied to them, it is employed immediately and continually afterwards. (Acts xiv. 4, 14.)

Thus appointed, Paul and Barnabas, taking Mark with them, proceeded on their mission. They went first to Seleucia, thence to Cyprus and Salamis. Afterward they visited Paphos, where Sergius Paulus the deputy was converted. Perga in Pamphylia was the next scene of their labours; where Mark left them, and returned to Jerusalem. From Perga the apostles proceeded to Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul delivered a long and earnest discourse in the synagogue on the sabbath-day. Having been driven from this city by violence, they went to Iconium, where a great multitude, both of Jews and Greeks, believed. From this place, also, they were compelled to flee, and reached Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia. At Lystra Paul healed a cripple, which produced such a sensation, that the people prepared to offer sacrifice to the apostles, thinking

them to be gods; and were with difficulty restrained from their purpose. Soon afterward, however, the influence of the unbelieving and violent Jews of Iconium and Antioch reached Lystra; when the men who a short time before would have worshipped Paul, now stoned him, until he was left for dead. But he soon recovered, and proceeded next day with Barnabas to Derbe. After preaching awhile in this place, the apostles retraced their steps, and returned by way of Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, Perga, and Attalia, confirming the believers in the faith, and appointing ministers to every church; and at length they returned to Antioch, whence they had set out.

The success of their ministrations among the Gentiles in the numerous cities which had been visited by Paul and Barnabas, as well as of the labours of other apostles and evangelists in different districts, hastened the consideration and decision of one of the most important questions ever mooted in the Christian church. Soon after the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, some Christian teachers came to that city from Jerusalem, and taught that except the converted Gentiles were circumcised, and thus subjected to the whole Mosaic law, they could not be saved. This doctrine occasioned "no small dissension and disputation," until it was at length resolved that Paul and Barnabas, with others, "should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." (Acts xv. 1, 2.)

The manner of proceeding in this case, as well as the conclusion arrived at, is important, inasmuch as it is the only one recorded in the New Testament in which there is a solemn and authoritative decision made on a question affecting the whole church. We will therefore mark with care the course of action pursued.

1. It was to "the apostles and elders" that the church of Antioch referred this matter; (Acts xv. 2;) and not to the body of believers at Jerusalem.

2. When the deputation from Antioch arrived at Jerusalem, "they were received of the church, and the apostles and elders;" and it seems that a meeting was appointed in which every one was at liberty to express his sentiments on this vital topic. (Verses 4, 5.)

3. After this discussion "the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter;" when they looked at the whole case in relation to the teaching of holy scripture, and agreed that the Mosaic law was not obligatory on Christians. (Verses 6—21.)

4. This conclusion, be it observed, was based on the scriptural fact, that the gospel of Christ had been prophetically set forth as a restoration of the tabernacle of David, and, consequently, was entitled to enjoy entire exemption from the ceremonial law, ritual service, and temple arrangements of the old covenant. (Verses 15—18.)

5. Their decision was attained without a vote. The men were so spiritually minded, and so fully under the influence of the Holy Ghost, that this suitable application of scripture was perceived by all, and allowed by all.

6. The “apostles and elders” having decided the question, they reported it to the body of believers, who united in the judgment, and sent some of their number to accompany the deputation back to Antioch.

7. But the communication thus made to the Gentile converts, although it expressed the perfect concurrence of the Hebrew believers in the conclusion arrived at, which, considering its character, was an important point, did not unite them with the ministry as giving authority to the law that was thus laid down. This was sent forth as “ordained of *the apostles and elders* which were at Jerusalem.” (Chap. xvi. 4.)

Such is a simple relation of this important process. Great efforts have been made to elicit from this case a *status* for the members of a Christian church to exercise co-ordinate authority with ministers, as to the final adjudication of all questions affecting the well-being of the church. And if strong assertion could do this, it would have been done long ago. But this task will be regarded as hopeless by all right-thinking men, when they hear a commentator so enlarged in his views as Dr. Adam Clarke say, “This was the first council held in the Christian church, and we find it composed of the apostles and elders simply.” And even Barnes, the most liberal of expositors, declares “that the business had been particularly referred to the apostles and elders; and that the apostles and elders deliberated on it, and decided it.”

But although the question of the obligation of Christian converts to obey the Mosaic law was thus authoritatively settled, the strong feelings which led to the controversy were not by this means completely subdued. The decision of the council perfectly relieved the Gentile converts, and they hailed it with joy; but the Hebrews at Jerusalem were still zealous for the law; so much so, indeed, that Paul, who afterward caused Timothy to be circumcised because, although he was the son of a Greek father, his mother was a Hebrew, now positively refused to allow Titus,



both whose parents were Gentiles, and who was with him at Jerusalem at this time, to be circumcised, although it was evidently urged upon him. (Gal. ii. 1—9.) But the struggle did not terminate here. After the close of this meeting, Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by Judas and Silas, returned to Antioch, where the decision of the council was received with great joy.

Soon afterward Peter also visited Antioch, and at first communicated freely with the Gentile converts; but afterward, being influenced by the strong prejudices of the Hebrews, he withdrew himself from all intercourse with them; and his example induced Barnabas to do the same. This roused the spirit of Paul, who withstood Peter, and rebuked him before the whole church, pointing out his inconsistency, and blaming his unworthy and time-serving conduct. It is observable that we have no account of Peter's reply to the noble address of Paul: (Gal. ii. 14—21 :) the probability, therefore, is, that, feeling his error, he ceased to pursue such a line of conduct, of which in fact we have no further notice.

The continued spread of the gospel, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, being mainly an account of the labours of Paul, it may be desirable, before we proceed to narrate his further labours and successes, to give a sketch of the manner in which his time was spent from his conversion to the period of his leaving Antioch after the council of Jerusalem, for another course of evangelizing operations.

This eminent apostle was converted about two years after the day of Pentecost; and, soon after he had been compelled to flee from Damascus by the persecution of the Jews, he went into Arabia, where he preached the remainder of that year, and the whole of the following one; after which he returned to Damascus; and then, about three years from his conversion, he went up to Jerusalem, and would have joined himself to the apostles; but they, suspecting his sincerity, shunned him, until Barnabas brought him to Peter and James, with whom he abode fifteen days. (Acts ix. 26, 27; Gal. i. 18, 19.) Here Paul boldly proclaimed the truth of Christ in a manner which so incensed the Greeks, that they went about to kill him; upon which the apostles sent him down to Cæsarea, from whence he went to his native city, Tarsus. From thence he went through Cilicia and Syria, preaching the gospel, and returned to Tarsus, A.D. 42, the seventh year of his own conversion. Soon after this, Barnabas, oppressed with the rapid success of the work at Antioch, came to seek him, when Paul accompanied him to that

city; from whence he was sent with Barnabas, by the Holy Ghost, on a tour of evangelization, which has been already narrated, and from which they again came to Antioch. Afterward he went to the council at Jerusalem; from which he again returned to Antioch, where he had the altercation with Peter, A.D. 50.

Paul and Barnabas now projected a new missionary tour; but the latter was anxious to take Mark with them, who was his sister's son. (Col. iv. 10.) To this Paul objected, as this young man had on their former journey forsaken them at Perga. Their difference of opinion on this point was so strong, that they separated; Barnabas taking Mark and sailing unto Cyprus, whilst Paul, in company with Silas, went through Syria and Cilicia.

We have a tolerably full account of the future labours of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, and, in fact, the only one which can be relied on. It will not therefore be necessary to do more here, than to give a rapid outline of these labours, with the best chronological arrangement of the time which they severally occupied.

This journey of Paul and Silas was begun in the year A.D. 50, seventeen years after the day of Pentecost. They proceeded to Derbe and Lystra. Here Paul found Timothy, who had been converted under his ministry at his previous visit to this place; and whom they took with them, after he had been circumcised, and ordained to the ministry by the laying-on of hands, both by Paul himself and of the presbytery, (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.)

During the next year (A.D. 51) Paul, with Silas and Timothy, pursued their ministerial career throughout Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, to Troas, (Acts xvi. 5—11,) where they appear to have been joined by Luke; for from this point he speaks of himself as making one of the company. From Troas they went over to Macedonia, when they founded a church at Philippi, and where Luke remained until Paul returned thither seven years afterward. (Compare Acts xvi. 17; xx. 5, 6.) Here Paul and Silas were scourged and imprisoned, but afterward miraculously released, and the jailer and his family converted. Subsequently, they pursued their course of labour through Amphipolis and Apollonia, to Thessalonica, where they were very successful. In the following year, (A.D. 52,) having been driven from Thessalonica by a tumult, they proceeded to Berea: thence Paul went to Athens; but, having heard of some disorders in the Thessalonian church, Silas and Timothy were sent to

correct them. (1 Thess. iii. 1—6.) Paul having preached with success at Athens, passed on to Corinth, (Acts xvii. 16—34 ; xviii. 1,) where Silas and Timothy joined him, and from whence he wrote his first Epistle to the Thessalonians in the names of these three ministers. (1 Thess. i. 1.) At Corinth Paul met with Aquila and Priscilla, and was very prosperous in his ministry during a period of one year and a half. At length the Jews who rejected the gospel, driven to madness by this success, arrested Paul, and brought him before Gallio, who was at that time deputy of Achaia ; (he was brother to Seneca, the great Roman philosopher ;) but the deputy refused to hear the case, and drove them from his court.

In the beginning of the next year (A.D. 54) Paul, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, went to Ephesus, and thence, through Cæsarea and Antioch, to Jerusalem, where he kept the Passover. (Acts xviii. 18—22.) After this, he again visited Antioch, and thence proceeded through Galatia and Phrygia, guiding and strengthening the rising churches in every place. He then went to Ephesus, where he found a devout company who had been baptized into John's baptism. These he more fully instructed, and they received, through his ministrations, the gift of the Holy Ghost. Paul stayed at Ephesus and its vicinity three years ; so that the gospel was proclaimed in Asia Minor with great diligence and happy results.

At length the effect of the gospel on the Ephesian idolatry was such, that Demetrius raised a tumult, which obliged Paul to leave the city, A.D. 58. (Acts xix. 24—41 ; xx. 1.) He then went to Troas, (2 Cor. ii. 12,) and from thence to Macedonia, (verse 13,) it being his intention by this route to reach Corinth. (1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7.) With this purpose he sailed to Greece, where he spent three months, and thence to Philippi, where he seems to have found Luke. (Acts xx. 1—6.) Timothy also joined the company at Philippi, and is therefore united with the apostle in the address of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, which was written from that place. Soon after this, the Epistle to the Romans was written.

Paul left Philippi in the beginning of April, A.D. 58, and passed by Troas on to Jerusalem. (Acts xx. 3—13.) In this journey he went through Assos, Mitylene, and Miletus. (Verses 13—15.) At the latter place he sent to Ephesus, requesting the elders of that church to meet him ; when he took an affecting leave of them. (Verses 16—38.) He then went on to Tyre, Ptolemais, and Cæsarea, where he was strongly dissuaded from going to Jerusalem. (Acts xxi. 1—12.) But he persevered



in his purpose, and reached the Jewish capital ; where he was kindly received by James and the elders, who greatly rejoiced to hear of the mighty progress of the gospel amongst the Gentiles. (Verses 18—20.)

James and these elders, however, on this occasion, informed Paul that there was a great misapprehension in Jerusalem with respect to his conduct, as it had been industriously circulated that he had laboured to persuade the converted Hebrews to neglect the Mosaic law ; at the same time assuring him that they were perfectly agreed as to the exemption of the Gentile believers from its claims. They therefore advised him to unite himself with four men who had a vow, and thus publicly show his respect for Mosaic ordinances. The apostle, true to his principles, of being all things to all men that he might win some, as far as he could with a good conscience, complied. But it seems that this compliance occasioned him and the church almost infinite trouble ; for, being in the temple, completing his purification, he was recognised by some who had just before seen him in the city in company with an Ephesian Greek, whom they supposed him to have brought into the sacred place. They immediately charged him with conspiring against the law, and polluting the temple ; on which a tumult was raised, when Paul was seized and hurried from the temple, and would probably have been killed, had not the chief captain been apprised of the uproar, and come with a band of soldiers and rescued him from their violence.

At his earnest request, the captain allowed Paul to speak to the people ; so he stood on the stairs, recounted to them his early conduct, his violent persecution of the Christian cause, his conversion, his call to the apostleship, and his mission to the Gentiles. The Jewish multitude heard him thus far ; but when he named the Gentiles, they drowned his voice in their execrations : on which the chief captain took him into the castle, and ordered him to be examined by scourging. But whilst the soldiers were preparing him for this punishment, Paul informed them that he was a Roman citizen ; on which the captain was alarmed, and desisted from his purpose, reserving his prisoner for future examination.

On the following day the chief captain took off Paul's chains, summoned the sanhedrim to meet, and placed him before them. He immediately began his defence by asserting that he had lived "in all good conscience before God to that day ;" when the high priest commanded those who stood by to smite him on the mouth, for which harsh and unjust conduct he was

sharply rebuked by the noble-minded prisoner. Paul, however, perceiving that one part of the council were Pharisees, and another Sadducees, insisted that he was a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, and that he was called in question "of the hope and resurrection of the dead." This produced a violent division among his judges, the Pharisees earnestly contending on his behalf, and the Sadducees violently clamouring for his condemnation. The chief captain, wearied with this altercation, removed Paul from the bar, and placed him in safe custody in the castle.

The further course of this prosecution is minutely detailed in the Acts of the Apostles;—how the Jews conspired to kill Paul, which fact was made known to the captain, who sent the prisoner, in consequence, to Cæsarea to be tried by the governor Felix, commanding his accusers to go down there also, and prefer their accusation against him. Ananias the high priest, with some other members of the sanhedrim, and Tertullus their orator, accordingly proceeded to Cæsarea, and preferred their charges; to which Paul replied in a masterly address, and on which Felix deferred his judgment until he had obtained further information from Lysias, the chief captain at Jerusalem. This, however, was but the ostensible reason; for the corrupt governor expected that Paul would have offered him money to obtain his liberty; and, this not being done, he kept him two years in confinement, and then left him bound to the care of his successor, Porcius Festus.

The new governor, having re-heard the case between Paul and his accusers, asked the apostle whether he would go up to Jerusalem to take his trial there; upon which Paul appealed to Cæsar. He afterward stated his case with great effect before king Agrippa; but, having appealed to the imperial court, he was sent thither. His voyage, shipwreck, and arrival at Rome are well known: in the imperial city he dwelt for two years in his own hired house, and preached the gospel to all that came unto him.

In the latter part of this imprisonment, A.D. 62, he wrote four Epistles. The first, to the Philippians, from which we learn that Timothy also was at this time at Rome. In this letter he intimates that the gospel had been received by some members of the imperial household. The second, to the Ephesians, which was evidently intended not for that church only, but perhaps for all those in Asia Minor. Then, one to the Colossians; and, lastly, that to Philemon. It is probable that about this time

Luke finished writing the Acts of the Apostles, as he carries his historical narrative no farther.

We have no certain information of the labours and sufferings of the apostle after this period. It seems highly probable, from many circumstances, that he preached the gospel in Spain, and perhaps also in Britain. Some writers have given a hypothetical narrative of his travels and labours, from the intimations of his purposes and desires which are found in his Epistles ; but this is very fallacious evidence. We know of several such purposes formed in the early part of his career, which he could not carry out ; and it seems natural to infer, that in this season of trial and persecution he would be subjected to more frequent disappointments. It seems, however, generally agreed that he suffered martyrdom at Rome about the year A.D. 68.

It will now be necessary to give a brief sketch of the labours of the other apostles, as far as they are known, before we proceed to consider the church as a whole at the close of the apostolic period. But here our information is extremely limited and unsatisfactory.

Of Peter it is said, that, after the council of Jerusalem, he went down to Antioch. Eusebius copies the following from Origen : "Peter is supposed to have preached to the Jews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia ; and at length, coming to Rome, was crucified with his head downwards ; himself having desired that it might be in that manner." Many learned men, however, and amongst them Scaliger, Salmasius, and Spanheim, deny that Peter was ever at Rome. Nor, as observed in a preceding Lecture, is it likely, as he was a married man living with his wife and mother-in-law at Capernaum on the lake of Gennesareth. It must not, however, be supposed that this at all affects the question at issue between Protestants and Papists, as to their alleged tale of Peter's having been bishop of Rome during twenty-five years. For whether Peter ever went to the imperial city or not, it is certain that he could not have been bishop there during this period : in fact, the allegation is altogether fabulous and legendary.

Andrew was Peter's brother : he was at first a disciple of John the Baptist, and was with him when he bore that remarkable testimony to the Messiahship of Christ at his baptism. Upon hearing this, Andrew and another disciple, probably John, followed Jesus ; on which account he is frequently termed "the first disciple." But this is not strictly correct ; for at this time he was not called to the apostleship. He was, indeed, as



far as our information goes, the first of the apostles who became acquainted with Jesus; but after staying awhile with him, he went and told his brother Simon, and brought him to Christ. But they did not remain long with him on that occasion; for they returned to their employment of fishing, until about a year afterward, when Christ, passing through Galilee, found them thus engaged on the sea of Tiberias; and, having proved his Divinity by the miraculous draught of fishes, called Andrew and Simon to follow him and become fishers of men.

After our Lord's ascension, we have little specific information respecting this apostle. As far as reliance can be placed on that which has been gleaned from ancient authors, it would seem that he preached with much success in Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Epirus, and, lastly, in Achaia, where he suffered martyrdom on the cross under Ægeas, the proconsul of that province.

James, commonly called the Great, as being the elder of the two apostles of this name, was the son of Zebedee, who appears to have been a person of some substance, having ships, (or large fishing-boats,) and servants engaged in the fishing-trade on the sea of Galilee. As Jesus passed by, and saw James and his brother in one of their father's vessels attending to his business, he called them to follow him; a call with which they instantly complied.

James was one of the favoured three of Christ's apostles who were called into more than ordinary intimacy with their Master. He witnessed the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and his Lord's glorious transfiguration, with his brother John; he was particularly associated with Christ, and the two brothers were called by him *Boanerges*, "sons of thunder."

Many tales are told of this apostle's labours; but all that is certainly known of him is, that he ministered successfully in Jerusalem, and was put to death by Herod Agrippa, A.D. 44.

John was the brother of James, and was, with him and Peter, admitted to the most intimate intercourse with his Divine Master. Indeed, John seems to have secured the largest share in the affection of Christ, and was consequently called "the disciple whom Jesus loved." To him Jesus committed the care of his own mother when he hung upon the cross.

John is said to have been eminently successful in preaching the gospel in Asia Minor. The churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and others, are said to have been founded by him; although in the latter part of his life he resided principally at Ephesus. He is supposed to have

incurred the displeasure of the emperor Domitian, and to have been cast by his order into a caldron of boiling or burning oil ; but, coming out unhurt, was afterward banished to the isle of Patmos. For the first part of this legend there seems to be no sufficient authority ; but his banishment to Patmos may be believed ; for the apostle himself all but asserts it : " I John was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. i. 9.) The latter part of his life he spent in Ephesus. It is generally believed that he left Patmos on the accession of Nerva, A.D. 96, and that he died about four years afterwards.

Philip was a native of Bethsaida in Galilee. After the day of Pentecost this apostle is said to have laboured in Upper Asia, where, by the constancy of his preaching, and the efficacy of his miracles, he gained numerous converts, whom he baptized into the Christian faith, healing at the same time their bodily distempers, and ministering, through the word of life, salvation to their souls. Having continued this course of usefulness for a long period, he, in the latter part of his life, came to Hieropolis, a rich and populous city of Phrygia, where his successful ministrations so incensed the idolatrous governors of the city, that they begun a furious persecution of the Christians, in which the aged apostle was first scourged and afterwards put to death.

Bartholomew is supposed to have been the same with Nathanael. In confirmation of this, it will be observed that, as John never mentions Bartholomew in his list of apostles, so the other evangelists never give the name of Nathanael. And as in John, Philip and Nathanael are put together, so in the other Gospels Philip and Bartholomew are always united. But the most conclusive evidence that these two names belonged to the same individual is found in the fact, that Nathanael is numbered with the disciples to whom Christ appeared after his resurrection at the sea of Tiberias ; for these were evidently apostles, and if so, Nathanael must be the same as Bartholomew.

We have but little information respecting the labours of this apostle ; but all ancient traditions place the scene of his ministry in the east, principally in Persia and Armenia, where, it is said, he was very successful. He is supposed to have extended his ministrations even to India, and at last to have suffered martyrdom in Albanople, a city of Armenia.

Matthew, although, when called to the apostleship, a Roman tax-gatherer, was, nevertheless, of pure Hebrew descent, and was born at Nazareth, where Christ was brought up. His position

in life, and means of obtaining wealth, were far beyond that of the humble classes in Judea. He is supposed to have preached in Ethiopia and Parthia; but nothing is known with certainty respecting him after the day of Pentecost. The manner of his death is unknown.

Thomas the apostle was certainly a Jew, and is supposed to have been a Galilean. His devotedness to Christ was of the highest order. When his Master proposed to return to Judea at the time when Lazarus died, Thomas, instead of dissuading him, promptly said, "Let us go, that we may die with him;" regarding the death of Christ as certain from the violent hatred of the Jews, and feeling quite willing even in those circumstances to share his fate. His obstinate incredulity in respect of Christ's resurrection casts important light on the natural temper of his mind.

After the day of Pentecost, Thomas seems to have devoted himself to the evangelization of India. Nor does this rest on any vague and legendary tradition. Not only do the earliest ecclesiastical writers, such as Jerome, Chrysostom, Athanasius, and Eusebius, relate the fact; but Cosmos, one of the first explorers of the East, declares that in A.D. 522, the pepper-coast of Malabar and the isles of the ocean, Loceolora and Ceylon, were peopled with a multitude of Christians. When, indeed, the Portuguese began their colonization in India, they found there nearly two hundred thousand Christians, who uniformly called themselves "the Christians of St. Thomas," and yearly commemorated his martyrdom by visiting his tomb. This apostle is said to have been stoned by the Brahmans; after which, one of them perceiving some signs of life in the body, thrust it through with a dart.

The life of James, the son of Alpheus, usually called James the Less, presents to us several difficulties. He is generally stated to have been the son of Mary, who, it is said, was the sister of the mother of our Lord. But then the difficulty of having two sisters called Mary has led to the notion that they were cousins, called "sisters" by the latitude in which this term of relationship was employed by the Hebrews. But that the sons of cousins should be called brethren, is rather too much even for this latitude: certainly the manner in which this relationship to Jesus is spoken of, is such as to render highly improbable every assumption of this kind. For when the Jews asked concerning Christ, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are



they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 55, 56;)—these questions clearly presuppose that these persons were not merely sons of a cousin to Christ's mother, which would allow for a vast difference between the condition of the respective families, but really brothers, and therefore identical in privilege and position. Besides, if we assume this, we must likewise suppose that Alpheus was also called Cleophas, and that his wife was called Salome as well as Mary; while, if, on the other hand, we suppose Joseph, the husband of Mary the mother of Christ, to be also called Alpheus, then the whole difficulty is solved. And that this is probable, will be seen in the fact that James is not only called "the brother of our Lord," but that Mary the mother of Jesus is emphatically called the mother of James. (Compare Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40; John xix. 25.) And I believe the maternal relation is never spoken of so loosely as to make a woman the mother of her cousin's son. If, therefore, on this assumption, we suppose James to be son of Joseph and Mary, and younger than our Lord, the whole case is plain. There is, however, another solution, which I regard as still more likely; namely, that James was the son of our Lord's mother by Alpheus a future husband. This opinion acquires great probability from the omission of the name of Joseph in the inquiry of the Jews referred to above: they speak of Mary as the common mother of the persons mentioned, but make no reference whatever to their father. At all events, I have no doubt but that James was born of the same mother as the Redeemer; indeed, Josephus, who is always particularly exact in respect of genealogy, says, distinctly, that "he was the brother of Jesus who was called Christ."\* Nor do I think any other opinion would have been formed on the subject, had not learned men been scared away from the truth by the ridiculous dogma of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

James appears to have remained at Jerusalem, where he attained an eminent reputation, and was surnamed the Just. It was this apostle who, by his pertinent quotation of the prophecy of Amos, decided the council of Jerusalem in favour of the exemption of Christian believers from the Mosaic ceremonial code.

He was stoned by the Pharisees; and his death was regarded as a great injustice, and one of the causes of the fearful calamities which soon overwhelmed the Hebrew state.

Simon the apostle is almost unknown in the history of the

\* Antiq. Jud., book xx. cap. ix. sect. i.

church. Some have supposed him to be the same with our Lord's brother of that name; but for this there is no authority. He is sometimes called Simon the Canaanite; but it is probable that the term whence this is derived, comes from the Hebrew *kana*, which signifies "to be zealous:" he is accordingly sometimes called *Zelotes*. It is generally supposed that he chiefly laboured in Egypt, and other parts of the north of Africa. The place and manner of his death are unknown.

Jude, or Judas, called also Thaddeus and Lebbæus, is believed to have been brother of James the Less and of the Lord himself. He is supposed to have been married, and mention is even made of his grandsons. The scenes of his ministerial labours were Judea and Samaria at first, and afterward Syria and Mesopotamia. The manner of his death is not known.

No candid person can carefully read the pages of holy scripture, and then with equal care and diligence collect all that is known of the labours and successes of the apostles and of their immediate successors, and have any doubt in his mind as to the true foundation and legitimate apostolicity of a Christian church. If the apostolic character of a church is to depend on an uninterrupted historical succession distinctly traceable in all its steps, then we do not hesitate to affirm that Christianity affords the worst possible grounds for the warrant of any such confidence. It were easier for a Mussulman to carry up an external line of connexion to his prophet than for any Christian church on earth to establish a line of historical succession from the apostles. A man must be a perfect volunteer in faith to attempt it. He must, in fact, either grossly deceive himself, or deliberately endeavour to delude others.

If, however, the character of a church is to be determined by its faith and spirit and conduct; if a hearty reception of scriptural truth, a clear experience of apostolic spirituality and privilege, a faithful maintenance of gospel ministry and ordinances, and a corresponding enforcement of moral purity;—if these constitute any community a Christian church, then we have the most abundant criteria for our guidance, the most ample means for the accomplishment of our purpose.

We have traced the history and progress of apostolic labour to the time of Paul's death, supposed to have taken place A.D. 64 or 65 at latest, comprising a period of thirty-four years from the day of Pentecost; and if we consider that, after the first few years, our information is almost entirely confined to the labours of one man, it is scarcely possible to conceive of more glorious results than flowed to the world from the

ministrations of the twelve apostles of our Lord. From India to Britain, these heralds of the cross had successfully proclaimed salvation to mankind through faith in Jesus, and every where sinners were converted to God.

While, however, we admire the signal triumphs which followed the preaching of Christ by the apostles and their co-adjutors, it is necessary to caution you against the prevalent error, that the churches thus founded were eminently pure in doctrine and practice, and free from all those errors, evils, and disorders which corrupt and disfigure the Christianity of subsequent times. This opinion has been entertained so strongly by many persons, that to identify any doctrine or usage with a portion of the first three hundred years of the Christian era, has been regarded as sufficient to establish its orthodoxy. A brief examination will be sufficient to dispel this illusion.

If, for instance, we look at Corinth; the church in this city was founded by an apostolic ministry, and was favoured with repeated visits from inspired ministers. Yet, when we read the account which is given us of their discipline by the pen of inspiration, we find here, that, among many other cases to which objection is made, an incestuous person was recognised as a member of the church, and that the Lord's supper was administered in a manner that contributed to gluttony and drunkenness! At Ephesus the elders are told, that of their "own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx. 30.) And, when writing to the Romans, the same apostle says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (Rom. xvi. 17.) To the Galatians also he had occasion to say, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." (Gal. i. 6, 7.) St. Paul also informs Timothy, that some, having swerved from the faith, had "turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." Hence he exhorts the young evangelist: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith." (1 Tim. i. 6, 7; vi. 20, 21.) A similar admonition is given to Titus: "A bishop must be blameless; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by



sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Titus i. 7, 9—11.)

The apostle Peter expressed similar sentiments: "There shall," he says, "be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring-in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." (2 Peter ii. 1—3.) And the apostle John says, "As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." (1 John ii. 18, 26.)

And if we extend our range of inquiry to the latter period of the life of the apostle John, we shall find that we have no more satisfactory account of the state of religion even in those churches which had been most favoured with apostolic ministry and oversight. From the observation and judgment of Him who cannot err, we learn that, although the church of Ephesus had "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and had found them liars," it had, nevertheless, lost its "first love." And this departure from the spiritual power of religion is described as such a fearful sin, that they are shown how their existence as a church depends on their instant repentance. (Rev. ii. 2, 4, 5.)

No complaint is made against the church of Smyrna; it is greatly comforted and encouraged: but even this is done in a way which shows the danger to which the truth amongst them had been exposed: "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Verse 9.)

The church of Pergamos, although existing where Satan had his seat, had held fast the name of Christ, and had not denied His faith. But it nevertheless had those among them which held the doctrine of Balaam; and also them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which were hateful to Christ. (Verses 12—15.)

Thyatira is severely censured for allowing one "calling herself a prophetess to teach and seduce" the people into fornication; an evil which is spoken of as pertaining to "the depths of Satan." (Verses 20, 24.)

The church of Sardis is said to have a name to live, but to be dead ; and instant repentance is enjoined. (Rev. iii. 1, 3.)

The church of Philadelphia is generally commended ; but in that city also were some of the synagogue of Satan, who falsely professed to be Jews. (Verses 7—9.)

The Christians of Laodicea are condemned as lukewarm, and urged to repent, being described as “ wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Verses 15—17.)

So that of these seven primitive churches, three, Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea, are shown to have lost in a great measure the saving power of religion ; two, Pergamos and Thyatira, are declared to have among them those who hold mischievous errors ; and the two others, Smyrna and Philadelphia, are exposed to the influence of persons who make a lying profession, and are guilty of blasphemy. It follows, therefore, that, even guided by the explicit teaching of scripture, we have no warrant for ascribing immaculate purity to apostolic churches.

Nor even in this period of the church was it free from those evils which have been its bane and curse in later times ; such as dissension and division through the self-will, pride, and officiousness of unstable disciples. Paul had to complain of some who were thus puffed up, at an early period of his ministry. (1 Cor. iv. 19.) But still more affecting is the language of “ Paul the aged,” while standing “ ready to be offered up :” “ This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me ; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.” (2 Tim. i. 15.) Nor was the apostle of the Gentiles the only one who had to lament over such conduct. John the beloved disciple, after sixty years of devoted labour in the service of Christ, had to say, “ But Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, *receiveth us not*. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words : and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casting them out of the church.” (3 John 9, 10.)

It is something for us to know, that the evils which some men now propose to cure by improved modes of organization, were not prevented by that organization which the apostles introduced ; nor did they resort to this means of removing the evil, but looked to another source. “ I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will,” said Paul, “ and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” (1 Cor. iv. 19,

20.) As if he had said, The duties devolving on every administration in the kingdom of God are sustained by a sufficient measure of power and unction from the Holy Spirit, which commends itself to the enlightened and spiritually minded in every Christian community. And in the confidence that this would be appreciated by the Corinthians, the apostle proposed thus to humble the vain boasting of which he complained.

Having thus given the information afforded by holy scripture respecting the state of religion in the Christian church at the close of the apostolic period, we will add the substance of what can be obtained from history to the close of the first century.

The death of the apostle James, our Lord's brother, was soon followed by the destruction of Jerusalem. Our limits will not allow even an outline of this fearful judgment, in which it is supposed one million of Hebrews perished by intestine discord, famine, and war. But it must be observed, that the Christians who had crowded toward the capital, warned by the prophetic language of the Saviour, took advantage of a most unaccountable movement of the Roman general, (who, after investing Jerusalem, drew off his army for a short period,) to fly from the city to Pella, where they found a temporary asylum, and were preserved.

The ruin of the Hebrew polity and capital had an important effect on the Christian cause. Whilst the temple remained, and the appointed Mosaic ordinances were administered, Judaism stood on peculiar vantage-ground. But when all this had been swept away in the ruin which engulfed the Hebrew state, then Christianity came forth without a rival as the divinely-appointed way of salvation. But although the Christians, as a body, left Jerusalem prior to its destruction, a Jewish-Christian church was soon formed amid the ruins of the destroyed capital; at the head of which was placed Simon, the brother of our Lord.

It was just after the commencement of the Jewish war that the emperor Nero, whom the apostle Paul designated "the lion," commenced the first general persecution of the Christians. This abandoned individual was supposed to have wantonly originated a fire for his amusement, which destroyed a great part of the imperial city; and afterward, anxious at once to exonerate himself, and turn attention to another party as the cause of the mischief, he accused the Christians of having caused the conflagration, and put great numbers of them to death with horrid tortures as an alleged punishment for the crime. To us it may appear not only strange, but improbable, that persons whose lives were so pure and blameless should



have afforded any plausible pretext for such a foul suspicion. It must, however, be considered that although this simple-minded purity might have protected the Christians while they remained a feeble and scattered community, it might, when they became numerous throughout the Roman empire, have produced results which induced fiery persecution. To show this, we have only to consider: 1. That the religion of Rome was intimately associated with the state. It was, in fact, no very difficult task to extend the range of this religion by the multiplication of foreign divinities; but it was a totally different thing to oppose to all this mass of priestcraft, idolatry, superstition, and impurity, a system of faith and morals as simple and pure as those of Christianity. 2. The Christian faith had no sacrifices, oracles, statues, or, at this time, even temples; it was, therefore, in the judgment of Romans, generally obnoxious to the charge of atheism, and its professors were in consequence treated as pests of society, as if enemies alike to God and man. 3. Paganism, by its numerous statues, temples, and shrines, was largely promotive of trade, and supplied employment to a vast multitude of people. Christianity, discountenancing all this pompous parade, was thought to be opposed to the general interests of the community. 4. The retirement and privacy which Christianity sought, exposed it to numerous vile slanders and calumnies. It was, indeed, not very indirectly asserted in many quarters, that the repeated evils which had recently afflicted the nation arose out of the toleration of a sect so opposed to the interests of the empire as Christianity. In these circumstances, the wicked artifice of Nero was likely to succeed; and with this view he inflicted unheard-of tortures on the unoffending disciples of Christ. Many were impaled, some thrown to be torn in pieces by wild beasts; others, wrapped in garments dipped in pitch, were set on fire, and burned to illuminate the city. Multitudes of the faithful, and some very eminent men, perished in this persecution. Nero died A.D. 68, when this murderous aggression on the cause of Christ ceased.

After the death of this monster, the Christians appear to have been freed from further direct molestation for about seventeen years; when a second persecution was commanded by the emperor Domitian. This appears to have been equally violent with the preceding; for a cousin of the emperor was put to death for this cause, and his wife, also a relation of the emperor, was sent into banishment. On the death of this cruel tyrant in A.D. 96, this furious aggression on the cause of Christ terminated, and again the church raised her head.

We are now brought to the close of the first century of the Christian era. It will be necessary, therefore, to add here, that the errors of which we read in the writings of the apostles, and at which we have already glanced, had, even at this early period, led to the establishment of various heresies. The principal of these we will now mention in order.

Simon Magus can scarcely be termed a heretic, but rather antichrist, inasmuch as he abjured Christ, and denied that the law and the prophets came from God. He asserted that he himself was the Messiah; that he appeared in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, and had been crucified. He denied the resurrection of the body, and allowed promiscuous intercourse between the sexes as a part of Christian liberty; with other tenets equally absurd and blasphemous.

Menander, a Samaritan, was a disciple of Simon Magus, and promulgated all the errors taught by his master; adding to them, that the world was not made by God, but by angels, and that he was *the virtue of God*, sent for the salvation of men. The sect which followed Menander did immense mischief in the second century.

Nicolaus, probably the deacon, had his name associated with errors which are condemned in the scriptures. It is said that he allowed a community of wives, and taught other equally impure doctrines.

The Nazarenes arose after the death of Simeon, in the Hebrew church of Christians at Jerusalem, in opposition to the Ebionites. The former appear to have insisted on the full observance of the Mosaic law by all Hebrew converts; while the Ebionites denied the Divinity of Christ, and taught that Jesus was a mere man, on whom a Divine Spirit descended at his baptism; and insisted, in opposition to the finding of the council at Jerusalem, that the Mosaic law was binding on all converts, Jews or Gentiles.

Hymenæus and Philetus taught that there would be no resurrection of the body. They had some followers in the Corinthian church.

To these may be added Cerinthus, whose tenets have been already mentioned.

We have numerous pieces, professing to have been written by apostles and Christian fathers of this age, besides those found in the New Testament; but the only one of these which has been received as genuine is the first epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Romans.

During this century the Pagan religion of Rome was conti-

nued, with all its pomp, superstition, and power. The only alteration recorded is, that, toward the close of it, the oracles ceased to give forth their responses as heretofore.

The second century is a most important period of the history of the church. After the close of the sacred canon, the first century produced no Christian records. We have, therefore, slender means of obtaining information respecting the state and progress of the church. Now this want is supplied. The second century produced a Christian literature which affords ample information respecting the circumstances, progress, and condition of the Christian church at this period. We will mention the principal of the Christian writers.

Ignatius is said to have conversed with the apostles, and is called bishop of Antioch. Of his episcopate we know very little: he appears to have been over earnest in insisting on the prerogatives of the clergy, especially the bishops. Numerous epistles are ascribed to him, of which seven are received as genuine.

Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna, and is supposed to have held that position, and to have been the "angel" of that church to whom the commendation was addressed by Christ through the apostle John. (Rev. ii. 8—11.) His epistle to the Philippians yet remains.

Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, is principally celebrated for having collected various traditions of the apostles; but it is believed that many were invented, and ascribed to him in the dark ages. He was a decided millennarian, and taught, according to Eusebius, that after the resurrection there will "be a bodily reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years." He was a good man, but of weak intellect.

Justin, surnamed the Martyr, was a native of Palestine, and a Platonic philosopher, afterward converted to the Christian faith. He is supposed to have visited Rome twice, and to have taught the gospel there with great boldness and success. Numerous works have been ascribed to him; but two Apologies and his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, are all that are now regarded as undoubtedly his.

Melito, bishop of Carthage, lived in the reign of the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius. He wrote an Apology for Christianity, and he has left a Catalogue of the Books of the Old Testament, which is particularly valuable as it mentions all the books except that of Esther.

Athenagoras, an Athenian, a Christian presbyter, wrote an



Apology and Oration on the Resurrection of the Dead, which are still extant.

Hegesippus, a converted Jew, lived in the reign of Antoninus. Eusebius ascribes to him five books of ecclesiastical history; but a few fragments alone remain.

Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, was a man of great learning, and a mighty defender of the faith against Hermogenes and other heretics, as well as against Gentile Heathens. All his works have perished, except three books on the Christian faith.

Irenæus was a disciple of Polycarp. He was born in Asia, and became afterwards a presbyter at Lyons, and subsequently its bishop. He possessed considerable learning; but was deficient in sound judgment. Many of his works have been lost: five books against the Valentinian heresy have been preserved.

Clemens, usually called Alexandrinus, is supposed to have been born at Athens: he was a disciple of Pantænus of Alexandria, and preceptor of Origen. In his early life he was ardently devoted to the pursuit of philosophy, and, even after he became a Christian, the philosopher seems to have prevailed in his character. His piety and profound learning are unquestionable; but although he held the fundamental truths of Christianity, his works, several of which have been preserved, and some are lost, contain many blemishes and theological errors.

Tertullian was a native of Carthage, and was bred to the law, but converted to the faith of Christ about the beginning of the reign of Severus. (A.D. 195.) He occupies a place in the first rank of the fathers, for learning, acumen, and eloquence. His style and language are animated, vehement, and sententious. His manners and disposition were severe. After writing many works of a religious character, he became a Montanist.

Tatian, Polycrates, Apollinaris, Quadratus, Dionysius of Corinth, and many other writers, contributed, more or less, to the religious literature of this period.

It will be necessary to consult these various productions carefully, and to arrange the substance of their teaching under several heads. In doing this our first attention shall be directed to the subject of doctrine. From the undoubted works of the Christian fathers of this century, we learn that the great elements of faith, as now held by Protestant Christians, were then taught and maintained: Such as, there is one God, the Creator; that the Son of God came into the world, died for sinners, rose again the third day, and ascended into hea-

ven ; that he will come again to judgment, raise the dead, and give eternal life to the righteous ; and that Christians should, therefore, live holy and godly lives. Not only on these generally-admitted truths are the writings of the primitive fathers explicit in their teaching ; they are equally so in respect of points which have been since violently controverted ; as, the canonical books of the New Testament ; the sufficiency of holy scripture for instruction to salvation ; one God existing in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ; the eternity of the Son, his satisfaction for sin by the shedding of his blood ; justification, or pardon of sin, through grace by faith ; preventing grace, its necessity and efficacy ; and also the unchanged nature of the sacred symbols in the Lord's supper. It cannot, indeed, be said that these doctrines were never in those days impugned ; but it was only by those who were regarded as the promoters of schism and error.

There is, moreover, in the genuine productions of the Christians of the second century, the entire absence of all recognition of those doctrines which have since obtained acceptance, and been wrought up into the body of antichrist. For instance : we hear nothing of purgatory, or human satisfaction for sin ; transubstantiation, or a change of the sacramental emblems into the real body and blood of Christ ; the sacrifice of the mass for the sins of the living and the dead ; communion under one form only ; confession as now practised in the Church of Rome ; the invocation and adoration of Mary as the mother of God ; the worship of images, relics, and consecrated wafers ; monastic vows, pilgrimages, indulgences, and the merit of works : all these are clearly shown to be the inventions of later ages, by their entire absence from the works of these fathers.

We have, indeed, sufficient proof that even at this early period the leaven of which the apostles complained had begun to produce its evil results in unauthorised and unscriptural peculiarities of doctrine. We are accordingly informed, that a belief had grown up, that the souls of the righteous after death descended to some place beneath the earth, where they were detained until the day of judgment, at which time they were to become partakers of the full enjoyment of eternal happiness. Hence prayers and offerings for these souls were not unfrequent in this century.

The usages and mode of worship which prevailed at this time can also be distinctly ascertained. As to ecclesiastical polity, each church appears to have conducted its own affairs ; although, in certain cases, several churches were confederated

together ; but it had become common for one of the presbyters in each important Christian community to be invested with a ruling authority over the whole body. But this arrangement, as Jerome distinctly assures us, did not imply any distinction of order, but was merely an expedient devised to secure the orderly transaction of business. This bishop, at the head of the presbyters and deacons, formed an assembly for the general direction of all ecclesiastical affairs.

At this period the Christians usually met for worship in private houses, in upper rooms, or other secluded places, commonly in secret, and not unfrequently at night ; in consequence of which they were called, by way of reproach, *light-haters* : for as yet Christians had no churches or places built expressly for the purpose of Divine worship. The method of conducting their sacred services is clearly indicated in the Apologies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Eusebius. First, a portion of the Old- or New-Testament scriptures was read ; then prayers were offered up, sometimes in a standing posture, at other times kneeling ; at the end of these supplications the people, as in the ancient synagogues, responded with a loud "Amen." The singing of psalms and spiritual hymns formed another important portion of primitive Christian worship. Exhortations or sermons were then delivered. Of the precise character of these discourses we cannot speak with certainty ; although it seems very probable that they were similar in object and manner to those which are preserved in the Acts of the Apostles : indeed, we may fairly judge that these discourses bore the same relation to the sermons of the apostles as recorded in the book of the "Acts," as the writings of Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Clemens, Tertullian, and other fathers of this period, do to the apostolical epistles.

After the sermon, the Lord's supper was usually administered. Bread and wine of the ordinary kind were the elements then used. The wine was sometimes mixed with water ; but this was not the earliest custom. The presiding presbyter generally engaged in this service. The people devoted themselves to private prayer, almsgiving, and fasting, preparatory to receiving the communion.

In primitive times the love-feast generally followed the communion-service, and both were consequently held on the sabbath ; but, before the end of the second century, they began to be celebrated on the day of the death of some illustrious martyr, at funerals, marriages, and on birth-days. The Lord's supper was received by the communicants sitting, or reclining



around a table, which was called the communion-table. The ministers were habited in simple and plain garments. About the end of this century, Christians began to adopt the practice of marking their foreheads with the form of a cross on leaving and re-entering their houses. The time of fasting, and the duration of fasts, were left entirely to individual opinion and feeling. Fasting was most general on the eve of the anniversary of the crucifixion.

The government of the church in this age was generally conducted by the bishop, presbyters, and deacons, who, forming a kind of council, directed its affairs. We do not hear of the laity taking any active part in this work, except in the African churches. The duty of the deacons was to take care of the poor, the sick, and those in prison, to arrange the offerings of the people, and to distribute the eucharist, or "thanksgiving," as the communion was generally called.

It cannot be said that the celibacy of the clergy was unknown at this period; but it was certainly not general, nor supported by any rule or law. A few individual examples of clerical celibacy existed, and Pinytus, bishop of Crete, wished to make the practice obligatory on the clergy; but Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, interfered, and exhorted him *not to depart from the gospel*: words which show in what low estimation the practice was held.

Heresy abounded in this age. Saturnius troubled the churches of Antioch and Syria; Basilides, Carpocrates, and others, did the same in other parts by disseminating the tenets of Simon Magus, and became the great leaders of the Gnostic heresy.

Hermogenes, about the middle of this century, taught in Africa; blending certain Stoic sentiments with gospel truth, asserting, among other errors, that matter was co-eternal with God.

Marcion, the son of a bishop, propagated the most wild and absurd doctrines respecting God, Christ, and moral duties. He contended that the Creator of the world was not God, but the author of evil; and that Christ was an appearance, a phantasm merely, sent into the world to defeat the purpose of the Creator, with other notions equally crude and absurd, and possibly more blasphemous.

Montanus, of Pepuza in Phrygia, also greatly disturbed the peace of the church, and marred the progress of the gospel, by his proceedings. He did not directly assail the truth of holy scripture, but assumed great austerity of life, and asserted that

he was divinely inspired with the spirit of prophecy; and, by the assistance of two females, Priscilla and Manimilla, secured numerous followers, who received him in this character, and who taught that Montanus was sent of God with Divine authority to perfect the Christian system by giving *the finishing touch* to the teaching of Christ and his apostles. His principal followers were Theodotus, Patroclus, and Artemon; and even the great Tertullian was led away by his apparent sanctity and austerity.

These and other heresies of less note, "taken collectively, opposed the whole of the Christian religion. Some denied the validity of the scripture, the law, and the prophets, and the apostolical writings, either as to their authority or sufficiency; others controverted the nature of God the Creator; others, the Trinity; and others, the person of Christ; some, the free-will of man; and some, the doctrine of justification by faith through grace; some entertained erroneous opinions on sanctification and good works; some, on marriage, baptism, the eucharist, fasting, &c., with many superstitions." You see, therefore, my dear brethren, that the gospel has not come to us as an untried system. From the dawn of ecclesiastical history we see it fiercely assailed by Satanic error; but, although betrayed by many unfaithful followers, it always triumphed.

We now notice the persecutions of this age. Trajan ascended the throne A.D. 98. On his accession there were no laws actually in force against the Christians in the Roman code; for the senate had abrogated the sanguinary laws of Nero during the short reign of his successor Nerva. Yet this absence of law did not prevent a Heathen magistracy from carrying out the views of an incensed Heathen priesthood, by persecuting Christians to death. We have, therefore, no formal edict for renewing the murder of Christians; but we have positive information that the infliction of this punishment was frequent. Pliny, who was perhaps one of the most amiable of Heathens, but who seems to have shared with his master an enmity to the cause of Christ, finding that great numbers were accused before him, as governor of Bithynia, of the crime of Christianity, wrote an epistle to Trajan, which is still extant, asking for positive instructions on this particular subject. The answer of Trajan was to this effect: "That the Christians were not to be officiously sought after, but such as were accused and convicted of an adherence to Christianity were to be put to death as wicked citizens, if they did not return to the religion of their ancestors." This edict of the Roman emperor being

duly registered among the statutes of Roman law, rendered, of course, Christianity a capital crime punishable with death. During the ensuing ten years this law was in operation; and multitudes, of both sexes and of every age, perished under its sanction.

The venerable Ignatius, fearless for himself, but careful for his flock, when the emperor came to Antioch, voluntarily presented himself to the imperial presence, and met the violence of royal power with the calm energy of Christian peace. After a lengthened interrogation, the Heathen monarch asked, "Dost thou, then, carry Him who was crucified within thee?" To which Ignatius replied, "I do; for it is written, 'I dwell in them, and walk in them.'" Upon which Trajan said, "Since Ignatius confesses that he carries within himself Him that was crucified, we command that he be carried bound by soldiers to great Rome, there to be thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people." This sentence was carried into effect; the holy man employing his time on the journey, in writing epistles to the Christians, in whom he felt the deepest interest. This persecution continued with great violence for ten years, and only ended with the death of Trajan, in the year A.D. 117. This is regarded as the third general persecution.

The repose of the Christians was, however, of short duration. Another furious persecution broke out in the following year, the first of the emperor Adrian. It does not appear that this arose out of any persecuting edict issued by this prince; but to have been rather the result of the law and conduct of the preceding sovereign. The fact seems to be, that Christianity had at this time so extensively progressed, as to threaten the existence of Heathenism. The priesthood, therefore, and its other adherents, were filled with madness against the Christian cause, and only required opportunity to exterminate it from the earth. This opportunity to a terrible extent the law of Trajan gave them; and they used it with the most merciless cruelty. Multitudes of martyrs, of every rank and of both sexes, underwent almost unheard-of tortures.

In the sixth year of his reign Adrian came to Athens, and was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries. This step showed his extreme attachment to Heathen institutions, and consequently displayed a spirit altogether alien to Christianity. Yet, undeterred by these unpromising appearances, Quadratus, the holy and zealous bishop of Athens, availed himself of the emperor's residence in the city to present to him an apology on



behalf of the Christians. Aristides, a Christian writer who happened to be at Athens at the time, did the same; and these probably had some effect on the mind of Adrian: but, about the same period, Serenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia, in whose province this persecution raged with the greatest fury, also wrote to the emperor, expressing his opinion "that it seemed to him unreasonable, that the Christians should be put to death merely to gratify the clamours of the people, without trial, and without any crime proved against them." This letter affords the first instance of any Heathen officer objecting to the sentiments of Trajan; namely, that Christians were to be punished for Christianity as such, as a capital crime in itself, and, consequently, affords evidence of the impression which the cause of Christianity was making, even on the minds of enlightened Heathens.

We cannot now discover the relative effects of these several appeals on the mind of Adrian; but it is a pleasing fact, that he soon after wrote a letter to Minucius Fundanus, the successor of Granianus in the government of Asia, which put a stop to the persecution of Christians. This letter is couched in very vague terms; but it insists on Christians having a fair opportunity of defending themselves, and threatens those who made groundless charges against them.

About ten years after this interposition on their behalf, the Christians who dwelt in Judea, especially those near to Jerusalem, suffered greatly from the malice of the Jews. In the sixteenth year of Adrian's reign, a Jewish impostor, under the title or name of Barcochebas, or "the star," in allusion to the star of Jacob, instigated his countrymen to an insurrection against the Romans. The Christians, of course, refused to aid or join him, and were, in consequence, as far as they were subject to his power, fearfully persecuted; and great numbers of them thus perished. Barcochebas succeeded in drawing the great mass of his countrymen into his cause, and for a short time made head against the Roman forces; but the effort was vain: Roman power prevailed; and the impostor, with multitudes of his adherents, miserably perished. The effect of this insurrection, although it inflicted terrible local injury, was, on the whole, beneficial to the Christian cause. By this means the Jewish power, which had always manifested a most malignant bearing towards Christians, was broken, and was never again recovered to the extent previously possessed.

The fifth great persecution of the Christians was begun A.D. 139, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, who is celebrated as a

great philosopher, and who certainly was not unacquainted with Christianity. Many authors contend that this sovereign did not issue any persecuting edict. It is, however, an undoubted fact, that Christian blood was abundantly shed under his government. We have already seen that the position of Heathenism was such, that no stimulus was required to call forth persecution. On the contrary, imperial protection was necessary to preserve Christians from malicious and bloody aggression on the part of an excited Heathen priesthood and magistracy; and that protection neither Antoninus nor his successor provided; and, consequently, a slaughter of Christians ensued, and was continued for many years, with a few intervals of cessation.

During these several persecutions, many individuals, eminent for piety, station, usefulness, and learning, were put to death with horrid tortures. The venerable Simeon, called the brother of our Lord, and bishop of Jerusalem, was crucified, when above a hundred years old, in the reign of Trajan. Ignatius of Antioch, as already related, was devoured by wild beasts at Rome; besides a great number of other ministers.

Under Antoninus equally eminent men were destroyed,—Justin Martyr, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, about one hundred years of age, Photinus, bishop of Lyons, Apollonius, a Roman senator, and many others. Martyrdom was, indeed, esteemed glorious; and the sepulchres of those who had thus nobly died were held in the greatest respect and reverence. A commemoration of the martyrs was annually made on the day of their death, attended, probably, with a panegyric on their lives, after the manner of the Greeks.

Notwithstanding this reverence for the memory of holy men, we find nothing in this century about the worshipping of relics, or swearing by them. Nothing is said of placing them on the altar, or of making offerings to them, or to the shrines of the dead. In fact, there is an utter absence of Roman Catholic doctrine and practice on this subject.

Though the progress of the gospel was great, Heathenism still held on its course, and exercised, to a fearful extent, its fatal influence over the minds of men. Yet this giant iniquity was daily rendered weaker by the means devised for its support. New deities were invented, novel forms of fanaticism devised, gorgeous temples erected to false gods, sports, plays, and every conceivable adjunct, were placed in requisition to support the declining influence of idolatry. Gradually, however, the public mind saw that a true system of religion could not need such accessories as these, nor indeed use them,

But this declining of Heathen power over the public mind naturally led to increasing hatred to Christianity, and to its professors. These were every where subjected to bitter insult and abuse; every low and opprobrious epithet was applied to them; and, in fact, the words of Christ and his apostles were literally fulfilled: "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." "We are the offscouring of all things unto this day." (Matt. x. 22; 1 Cor. iv. 13.)

The feelings which dictated this course of conduct, also led to some literary efforts to put down the Christian cause. Crescens, a Cynic philosopher, Lucian, an Epicurean, and Celsus, also of the latter sect, respectively directed their learning, craft, and eloquence against the cause of Christ. The union of invective, falsehood, and bitterness which these works exhibit, although it harassed the Christians and bolstered up the declining cause of Heathenism for a time, failed of their object. Justin, Origen, and other able Christians, completely answered these libels, and vindicated the truth.

The third century opened with the seventh year of the reign of the emperor Severus. It saw Christianity adopted, at least in form, by multitudes in very many parts of the civilized world; and great numbers really felt the power of saving truth. The church was then, indeed, in a prosperous condition. Christians were not only tolerated, but permitted to hold offices of trust in the state; although the hatred of many philosophers and violent Heathens still continued.

Among the eminent teachers who were alive at the beginning of the third century, and who may be regarded as being instrumentally the ornaments and supports of the Christian cause, we may reckon Irenæus, Tertullian, Pantæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Minucius Felix. Victor presided over the church of Rome, the aged Narcissus at Jerusalem, Serapion at Antioch, Demetrius at Alexandria, and Theophilus at Cæsarea.

Besides these, others arose during the third century, who, by their great talents and virtues, mightily contributed to support and extend the Christian cause. Among these we may first mention Origen. He was born at Alexandria, about A.D. 185, and, employing his great abilities with diligence, acquired an immense range of learning. So early and remarkable was his proficiency, that when quite a young man he attracted general attention by his piety and erudition. Whilst yet a layman, he preached the gospel even in the presence of bishops. His labours were mainly directed to a study of the scrip-



tures ; and he did much toward placing before the Christian world the most correct edition of these sacred books. His genius, however, was too luxuriant, his imagination too vigorous, to entitle him to be considered a safe commentator. He fell into several doctrinal errors, which afterwards occasioned much discord, and produced deplorable results in the church. Julius, called Africanus, in this age, wrote a celebrated treatise on Chronology, for the purpose of reconciling the dates of sacred and profane history. He also wrote some epistles, and a piece on the genealogy of Christ. Hippolytus produced his "Demonstration of Antichrist." Gregory of Neo-Cæsarea was eminent as a successful minister. When he entered on the duties of his office, it is said there were but seventeen Christians in his district ; and when he died he left but seventeen idolaters there. Dionysius, a disciple of Origen, was surnamed "the Great," on account of his able defence of the doctrine of the Trinity. Many others might be mentioned, as eminent for talents and usefulness, in the eastern churches. Minucius Felix, an African by birth, afterwards a Roman lawyer, wrote an elegant dialogue, and many other works on the doctrines, rites, manners, and discipline of the Christians. Cyprian was bred a Heathen, converted to the faith of Christ, and became afterwards bishop of Carthage. His piety, zeal, writings, labours, and martyrdom for the Christian faith, have placed him in the foremost rank of the confessors of Christ. His works, as now presented to us, are very embarrassing ; for, with much that is excellent, they contain passages which, if actually written by Cyprian, prove that even in this early age frightful improprieties and indecencies had obtained the sanction of the Christian church. It is, however, supposed by many, that these are interpolations inserted into the writings of this father for the purpose of covering the delinquencies of succeeding ages. Arnobius, an African rhetorician, the preceptor of Lactantius, Caius and Cornelius, bishops of Rome, Pontius, an African deacon, and some others, adorned and supported the church in the West. It is worthy of observation, that, at this period, the north coast of Africa contained a very important part of the Christian churches. We read of Cyprian assembling around him from this district sixty-six bishops.

The godly zeal for the extension of the gospel, so signally observable in primitive times, still continued ; and, in consequence, the churches already planted were gradually enlarged by the constant increase of new converts. This was, in fact, generally remarkable in the western parts of Asia, northern

Africa, and throughout Europe, even unto Britain. Many new churches were formed in Arabia by Origen, and in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland, by missionaries who hazarded their lives to make known the way of salvation to perishing men. These accessions to the church were marked by the conversion of many eminent persons. An Arabian prince, Mammæa, the mother of the emperor Severus, and even the emperor Philip, are supposed to be among the number.

From the undoubted extant works of the Christian writers of this century, it is evident that the same great doctrines which were seen to obtain in the preceding century were still believed and taught; such, indeed, as are now received in all pure Protestant churches. The works of Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, and Gregory, afford ample proofs of this statement. The same authors also show, that doctrines which have since been warmly controverted were then firmly held. Such, for instance, as the authority and sufficiency of holy scripture; the canon, or catalogue of the Old and New Testaments, being the same then as that which is now received; the unity of God existing in a Trinity, the words "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," being distinctly used by Tertullian; the eternity and ineffable generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Spirit; original sin and corruption of man; also redemption and satisfaction by Christ; Divine grace, and justification by faith alone, followed and evidenced by holiness of life; the adoration and invocation of one God. Many passages also are found in these writings, which bear decided testimony against tradition, the usurped power of the bishop of Rome, purgatory, worship of images and angels, transubstantiation, &c.; although, at the same time, it must be admitted, that the writers of this age not unfrequently expressed themselves in very loose language; and that, consequently, passages may be selected respecting the Trinity, the Person of the Son, tradition, sacrifice, priest, altar, satisfaction, confession, penitence or penance, indulgence, and merit, which are not strictly according to sound doctrine, and which may appear to countenance errors which have been since introduced into the church, although nothing is more evident than that the writers did not use these expressions in the same sense in which they are used by modern Socinians and Roman Catholics. So gradual and insidious was the progress of error!

The further we recede from the times of the apostles, the more we find the pure simplicity of spiritual worship adulterated by unmeaning or superstitious rites and ceremonies. This is par-

ticularly observable in this century. In many instances, customs and rites, which were practised in Heathen temples, when appearing harmless in themselves, were incorporated into Christian worship, in the hope thereby to make it less objectionable to serious Heathens, who might thus be brought to hear the gospel. Still the general order of service—reading the scriptures, singing psalms or hymns, preaching and prayer—was continued as in the preceding century.

With such numerous sources of information, it is truly surprising that we have not the means of knowing whether, in this age, the Christians had any places set apart for public worship. We cannot settle this point with certainty; although it seems most probable that places for the public worship of Christians had not as yet been raised.

Baptism was still administered in a very simple manner; but at different times and places, considerable additions were made to this sacrament. Questions and replies in a prescribed form were introduced; and fasting, watching, anointing, the kiss, the offering of milk and honey, and sealing, were gradually brought into use. In many places baptism was delayed until the age of about fourteen; and Tertullian urges the propriety of this delay with great zeal.

The Lord's supper was also administered in a very artless form, although in some places it began to be given in the morning. The habits of the ministers continued to be simple and plain.

It is important to show, as precisely as possible, the extent to which innovation had been carried, and how far the church was saved from the evil practices which afterward obtained. We do all that is possible in this way, by stating that, at this time, water was used instead of wine in the Lord's supper; and that this sacrament was sometimes given to infants, and carried to the sick. One burial-ground was provided, common to all the faithful, at one place. A speech was generally delivered at the funeral, of a panegyric kind, and some pomp was usually displayed on these occasions. The days on which martyrs suffered were called their "birth-days," and the anniversaries of these were celebrated with feasts, speeches, and every manifestation of joy. This was obviously derived from Heathenism; but Gregory of Neo-Cæsarea enforced it by a canon. Prayers were made for the dead, on the ground previously mentioned. A small cross cast in brass or other metal was frequently worn as a mark of distinction from the Heathen, and a sign of recognition among Christians. Unmarried



women devoted themselves to God and the practice of good works; but these vows were not irreversible. Christians almost universally continued remarkable for simplicity of manners, and abounded in offices of kindness to each other, and to the poor, sick, and others in suffering circumstances. Still it is manifest that they had departed in some measure from their primitive purity; and a corruption of morals, as well in the clergy as in the people, began to be perceptible in the church. The ambition, rivalry, dissensions, tyranny, and fraud of some of the bishops and clergy, were the subjects of great animadversion, and caused much sorrow to Cyprian and other good men. This ambition was, indeed, carried to such an excess, that in some cases the pulpit was called "the throne."

Yet, notwithstanding these sad innovations, we have no mention in this age, by any sound Christian writer, of any altars, properly so called, or of real sacrifices, lights burning in the day, of images or pictures set up in churches, of incense burned, crosses erected, or of holy water sprinkled upon the people. There was at this time no elevation or adoration of the elements, nor any procession conveying them; no bowing of the knee to them in token of worship, private masses, or communion in one kind only. Prayers were not addressed to the Virgin Mary, or to any of the saints. The title of pope, papa, or father, was frequently given to bishops; but the bishops of Rome had no authority over African, Asiatic, Spanish, or French churches, nor indeed beyond the limits of their own see. Marriage was as free to the clergy as to the laity.

The principal heresies of this period were introduced by the following persons. Noetus, an Asiatic, and Sabellius, an African, confounded the doctrine of the Trinity, by teaching that there were not three persons, but three different manifestations of the same person: that it was, in fact, God the Father who became incarnate, and was afterwards manifested as the Holy Ghost. Nepos revived the errors of those who gave to all the promises of scripture an earthly sense. Paul of Samosata broached doctrines very analogous to those held by modern Socinians. Manes, a Persian, became the founder of the Manichæans. Gathering up the worst elements of the Gnostics and of Marcion, he propounded a deadly heresy, which did immense mischief to the church. He taught that there existed two great principles, one evil, and the other good. He rejected the law and the Old Testament; insisted that every thing was bound by an absolute necessity; that Christ was only in outward appearance human; that marriages were unlawful; and

that himself was the paraclete and apostle of Jesus Christ. Hieracas propagated many of these errors in Egypt.

This century produced many very bloody persecutions. Severus, who had favoured the Christian cause in the early part of his reign, fiercely persecuted the Christians afterward in the beginning of this century, when vast numbers were put to death. About twenty-five years after the death of Severus, Maximinus renewed the persecution; and, directing it principally against the ministers and teachers, great numbers of them were cut off. The seventh persecution took place in the reign of Decius, and was very bloody and destructive. Vast numbers perished, including many women and youths; and many professors relapsed into Heathenism, to save their lives. Valerian ordered the eighth persecution. He had favoured the Christians, but is supposed to have been excited against them by some Egyptian magi. This persecution extended over Italy, Palestine, Egypt, and Africa. At this time Cyprian was beheaded, Sixtus, bishop of Rome, crucified, and Laurentius, a deacon, roasted alive over a slow fire. The ninth persecution was begun in the latter part of the reign of Aurelian.

In this century the only writer of note who assailed the Christian cause was Porphyry, a Tyrian, who surpassed all others in virulence. The Roman lawyers were generally opposed to the gospel; and the deep hostility of the Heathen priesthood still continued, and successively produced the several persecutions noticed above. The entire aspect of the world clearly showed that a great religious crisis was at hand. M. Aurelius Antoninus wished to abolish polytheism, and, instead of the endless multitude of deities, to substitute one only,—the sun, under the name of Heliogabalus. Alexander Severus desired to raise a temple to Jesus Christ, as one of the gods. The emperor Aurelian venerated the books of the sybils; but they do not seem to be the same as those which are handed down to us. Various Pythagorean and Platonic doctrines and usages were introduced, in the hope of sustaining the declining cause of Heathenism.

In this condition was the religion of the Roman empire found at the close of the third century. Christianity had been disseminated with holy diligence and godly zeal, and had not only invincibly resisted all opposition, but had extended its influence to every part of the civilized world. Even the most determined, bloody, and long-continued persecutions failed of their object, and rather tended to increase than to diminish the number of the faithful; thus giving rise to the well-known

adage, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Yet the melancholy fact is so fully apparent that it must be recognised,—Christianity had lost much of its primitive purity. Its ministers had imbibed a worldly spirit; the worship of God was burdened with many superstitious appendages; and if the doctrines of the gospel were not absolutely denied, they were certainly, to some extent at least, adulterated by unauthorised additions.

As was the state of religion at the end of the third century, so it remained till the reign of Constantine, with the exception of the tenth persecution; which was the most violent of all. From the death of Aurelian to the nineteenth year of Diocletian,—twenty-eight years,—the Christian cause had been unmolested, and its professors greatly multiplied. But this fearful scourge descended on the unoffending worshippers of Christ, as if it had acquired intensity from the previous calm. Its rage was vented against places of Christian worship, Bibles, ministers, and laity. In fact, no age, sex, or profession was spared: multitudes perished. The death of the monster who had begun this massacre did not stop it; his successors, Galerius in the East, Maximinus in Africa, and Maxentius in the West, continued its furious ravages until the power of Constantine had subdued all opposition. When he obtained universal power, he restored peace to the church.



## LECTURE XI.

### THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, FROM THE ACCESSION OF CONSTANTINE TO THE GREAT REFORMATION.

ACCESSION OF CONSTANTINE TO UNIVERSAL EMPIRE—An Estimate of his religious Character—His Measures for the Support and Extension of Christianity—Reigns of his three Sons—Constantius obtains the whole Empire, and prohibits Heathen Rites—Yet Christianity did not progress as expected—Causes of this—The Introduction of ceremonial Rites, Errors, and especially Monachism and the monarchical Principle, into the Ministry, and the Exercise of judicial Functions by the Clergy—Constantine acted as *Pontifex Maximus* in the Christian Church—The Results of this Conduct—Case of Arius—The violent Efforts of this Heretic—His Death—Progress of the Arian Heresy under Constans and Constantius—The latter violently persecutes those who adhered to scriptural Truth—Julian the Apostate persecutes the Christians—Jovian, who succeeds to the Empire, stays this Persecution and protects the Followers of Christ—Injurious Effect of imperial Interference in the Church of Christ—State of the Church after these Changes had been introduced—Their fatal Effects—Valentinian and Valens reign—The Council of Laodicea—Murderous Cruelty of Valens to the Church—Gratian—Theodosius prohibits Paganism—This Measure injurious to the Church, and followed by its rapid Deterioration, through the Ambition of Ministers, and the Increase of Monks—THE FIFTH CENTURY—The State of the Church—Progress of Pelagianism—Still further Degeneracy of Morals and of Ministers—Justinian greatly increases the civil Power of Bishops—Superstitious Innovations rapidly increase—Mariolatry—The Sacrifice of the Mass—The candid Statement of Gregory respecting Antichrist—The Bishop of Rome addressed as Universal Bishop—He acquires temporal Sovereignty—Rapid Developement of the Papacy—Its complete Form a remarkable Fulfilment of the prophetic Scriptures—The total Separation of the East and Western Churches—Character of the East or Greek Church—Blasphemous Assumptions of the Popes—Error added to the Truth the Means of Papal Perversion—*Rationale* of Papal Progress—The Error and Superstition which had been introduced into the Church destroyed public Morals, and brought Society to the Brink of Ruin—A Reform was indispensable—The Church might have been saved by a Return to the Truth—It was ruined by a Reliance on Organization and clerical Power—THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH CENTURIES—Instances of Piety—Teaching of the Papacy—THE EIGHTH CENTURY—The Existence of the Church in Europe imperilled by Saracenic Invasion—Progress of Corruption in the Romish Church—Instances of real Religion—THE NINTH CENTURY—Progress of Corruption at Rome—This Error resisted—Promulgation of evangelical Truth—THE TENTH CENTURY—Infamous State of the Clergy in the East and at Rome—Nations professedly converted—THE ELEVENTH CENTURY—The

Crusades—Earnest Contests for scriptural Truth—THE TWELFTH CENTURY—Further Crusades—Character of the papal See—Progress of Corruption—The Waldenses, their Piety and Persecution—THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY—Papal Arrogance—Antichristian Error of Rome consummated—Witnesses for the Truth in Opposition to Papal Error—The Albigenses and Waldenses, their Piety and Persecutions—THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY—State of the Church—Schism in the College of Cardinals—Rival Popes—Popery opposed—Progress of sound Doctrine—Wickliffe—THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY—Conflict of Light and Darkness—John Huss and Jerome of Prague burned—Enormous Iniquity of the Papacy—Invention of Printing—THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY—State of the Church—Luther secures the Reformation in Germany—Henry VIII. separates England from Rome—Protestantism established.

WE have traced the rise of the Christian church, its progress, triumphs, errors, and persecutions, until one master-mind, impressed with a reverence for the truth as it is in Jesus, was enabled to subdue all his enemies and rivals, and, by wielding the power of the Roman empire, virtually to direct the destinies of the civilized world.

Constantine the Great was the son of the Roman emperor Constantius Chlorus, who ruled over the western provinces of the empire, and resided for some time in the city of York. Baronius and many others have believed that Constantine was born in Britain; but this is now generally discredited. Constantius was favourable to the Christian cause, although at the time of the persecution under Diocletian he had not influence sufficient to prevent Heathen zealots from committing frightful ravages in Britain, where he then governed. The old British historian, Gildas, tells us that in this country, on that occasion, "the churches were overthrown, all the copies of the holy scriptures which could be found were burned in the streets, and the chosen pastors of God's church butchered, together with their innocent sheep, in order that not a vestige, if possible, might remain, in some provinces, of Christ's religion." Yet it seems that Constantius did what he could to sustain the influence of the truth. It is said, that at the commencement of that persecution, calling together the officers of his household, he announced to them the pleasure of the emperor, requiring the dismissal of all Christians from office; and gave those who were of that religion their choice, either to renounce their creed, or to resign their situations. Some of them, unwilling to make the required sacrifice, abjured their faith; upon which Constantius discharged *them* from his service, declaring that those who renounced their God would never prove true to an earthly master. The wife of Constantius and mother of Constantine

was called Helena, and is said by Christian writers to have been "a discreet, pious, and devout Christian;" but whether she merited this character during the time that she was the wife of Constantius may be doubted. According to the usage which then obtained, when Maximinus adopted Constantius, and raised him to the dignity of Cæsar, he was required to put away his wife, and to marry a daughter-in-law of his patron, on which Helena retired into private life until the accession of her son. Constantine, who had greatly distinguished himself in the wars and court of the emperor Galerius, at length joined his father at Bolougne, and accompanied him to Britain, for a campaign against the Picts. Soon after this, Constantius died at York; and Constantine, by the appointment of his father, and the unanimous acclamations of the army, succeeded to his power. Galerius, however, was extremely reluctant to acknowledge a man of such capacity and bravery as a colleague in the empire; he therefore only awarded him the title of Cæsar, and even granted this with evident reluctance; and, as a means of cutting off Constantine from all hope of attaining the imperial dignity, Severus, the son of Galerius, was at the same time raised to the rank of emperor. But all these efforts were vain.

Constantine, by a happy combination of daring prowess and consummate prudence, increased his troops, and availed himself successfully of all the changes and plots of that agitated season, until at length, by the defeat and death of all his rivals in succession, he surmounted every obstacle, and, A.D. 322, became the sole monarch of the Roman empire.

It was during the season which elapsed from the death of his father to the attainment of universal empire, that Constantine appears to have progressed from regarding the Christian cause with a cold and partial favour, to that of a zealous and devoted supporter of the church. There can be no doubt that the dangers by which he was constantly surrounded, and the felt necessity, in such circumstances, of more than a human ground of confidence, led this prince to a serious study of the religion of Jesus, and, at length, to a hearty reception of its Divine doctrines. According to the account given by Eusebius, it would seem that the turning-point of this change took place when Constantine marched from France to Italy, to attack Mazentius; on which occasion he saw a luminous cross in the heavens with the inscription, "Conquer by this." We confess we do not attach much credit to this story, which is now rejected by many of our most judicious writers. It is, however, certain that, throughout the whole of the wars in which Con-



stantine was engaged in the pursuit of empire, the struggle became increasingly, day by day, a contest between the Christian faith, and the remains of the old Roman Paganism. As the more formidable rivals of Constantine were among the most cruel and relentless persecutors of the Christians, the followers of Christ naturally rallied around the standard of Constantine, and formed his most valuable support. In those circumstances, whatever may have been the religious opinions of the conqueror, it might have been his soundest policy to take such measures as would secure the Christian population of the empire as his firm friends. The faith of Christ had at this time penetrated into every part of the empire, and was embraced by the most temperate, enlightened, and sound-minded of the people. Even supposing, then, that Constantine was himself utterly indifferent to religion, we should not wonder at his releasing Christianity from persecution, and even patronising the professors of this faith. A careful review of the whole subject, however, leads us to a judgment of the character of the first Christian emperor more favourable than this. It seems very probable that this warrior began life by regarding all religions as of equal authority. But, following him throughout his early martial career, and allowing for the influence which the known views of his father would have on his mind, and judging of his opinions from his own actions, it seems highly probable that Constantine was brought to an undoubted conviction of the truth of Christianity as a religious system. His toleration of its worship, and even patronage of its ministers, arose, therefore, in all probability, from the honest dictates of his enlightened judgment; but to what extent the saving influence of this religion was received and experienced by the noble Roman, is a far more doubtful question. We very greatly regret that we have not sufficient proof that Constantine was spiritually enlightened, or savingly converted to God, at least in this period of his history. He renders to religion, it is true, a large and liberal patronage; but he never fails to take such measures as shall make its influence re-act on his political security and aggrandisement.

The progress and character of Constantine's patronage of the church may be seen in the following outline of his edicts in her favour:—A.D. 312. He released the clergy from burdensome municipal offices, to which previously they were subject. A.D. 315. He abolished several regulations previously in force, which were oppressive and offensive to the Christians; and about the same time the manumission of slaves in the churches

was made valid, legacies to churches were made legal, and various immunities were granted to the clergy. A.D. 321. The general observance of Sunday was decreed.

Immediately after the victory of Constantine over Lucinius had established him in possession of supreme power, he publicly professed himself a Christian; and although he delayed his baptism till toward the close of his life, he adopted various measures for rendering this faith more acceptable to his subjects in general. He engaged with zeal in the building of many splendid churches, and liberally contributed towards the erection of many others. He ordered revenues to be supplied to many more out of the common fund of the cities. Afterwards he confiscated the revenues of many Heathen temples in the East, and appropriated them to the support of Christian churches; and entirely prohibited Heathen worship in those places where it was notoriously associated with flagrant immoralities, as the worship of Venus in Phœnicia, and of the Nile in Egypt, &c.

Yet, notwithstanding these measures, Rome still continued to be fearfully addicted to its ancient superstitions. Partly, therefore, to rear up a civil population more agreeable to his religious views, and partly to provide a more central and eligible seat of government for the whole empire, Constantine directed his attention and efforts to the erection of a capital city at Byzantium, which, after his own name, he called Constantinople. There can be no doubt that the opinion of Mosheim is well founded; namely, that Constantine throughout the remainder of his reign “employed all the resources of his genius, all the authority of his laws, and all the engaging charms of his munificence and liberality, to efface, by degrees, the superstitions of Paganism, and to propagate Christianity in every corner of the Roman empire; and therefore openly opposed the sacred rites of Paganism, as a religion detrimental to the interests of the state.”

On the death of this sovereign, A.D. 337, he was, according to his own appointment, succeeded by his three sons, Constantine II., Constantius, and Constans, who were all saluted as emperors and *Augusti* by the Roman senate. But the first act of these princes affords sad proof that no infusion of holy truth had purified the morals of imperial policy. There were living, at the death of Constantine, two of his brothers, and several of their sons. These the new emperors immediately ordered to be put to death; and the savage order was fully executed, except on Gallus and Julian, sons of Julius Constantius.

Assuming the government of the empire, the three sons

of Constantine divided it between them ; but this partition was soon violated, and a war ensued between Constantine and Constans, in which the former lost his life, and the latter succeeded to the government of all the western and central parts of the empire. After reigning thus for about ten years, Constans was assassinated by Magnentius, who soon afterward slew himself, to avoid falling into the hands of Constantius. These events placed the whole empire in its vast extent once more under the government of one ruler ; and it is worthy of observation, that, on his accession to this universal dominion, Constantius prohibited Heathen sacrifices on pain of death. This occurred in the year A.D. 350 ; and it forms a memorable epoch in the history of the world. We do not here give any opinion as to the propriety or impropriety of this enactment. For aught we know to the contrary, it would have been much more just and righteous for Christian princes, when invested with supreme power, whilst evincing earnest solicitude for the conversion of their Heathen subjects, to have awarded them those rights of conscience for which the Christians, when persecuted, contended as the unalienable rights of all men. Nevertheless, the legal enactment which made Heathen rites a crime throughout the Roman empire is in itself a fact of no ordinary interest. But, whilst this was the statute-law of the empire, so strong was the feeling in favour of Heathenism in Rome and Alexandria, that this law could not be enforced in these cities, and probably not in some other large places.

In those circumstances, Christianity was placed fully on equal terms, in antagonism to Heathen superstition ; yet even then, it must be confessed, it did not make that progress which might have been hoped and expected. The departure from primitive Christianity, to which allusion has been made, and other deteriorating influences, had by this time exercised a fearful influence on the aggressive spirit of the Christian people. We may notice two or three of the more prominent causes which contributed to this result.

The additions which had been imported into Christian rites had greatly corrupted the simplicity which originally obtained ; whilst the errors and speculations which had from time to time been propounded, had, by dividing the Christian community into sects, destroyed the unity of action and irresistible testimony in favour of the truth, which had previously borne down all opposition.

In addition to these, monachism had not only been introduced, but extensively adopted. Much useful mind was there-



fore abstracted from the church, and sequestered in deserts, cloisters, and caves; whilst superstitious and absurd notions, as to the sanctity of virginity and celibacy, greatly corrupted the church, and introduced a spirit and practice most alien from scriptural Christianity.

Another evil which had by this time become general, was, the introduction of the monarchical principle into the government of the church. Originally, the ministers of Christ appear before us as brethren. And afterward, when, in consequence of the increase of believers and of ministers, it became necessary "that one person elected from the presbyters should be placed over the others," to preserve order and prevent divisions in the church; this arrangement, as Jerome most emphatically assures us, arose out of human custom and necessity, and not by the "Lord's appointment." And it is more than probable that at first the great respect and regard with which the bishop was treated, and the deference paid to his judgment, arose from his eminent piety and ability, and was therefore just and proper. Yet, afterwards, the bishops so appointed claimed to possess great powers of an entirely distinct and superior order to those ascribed to presbyters. So early as the second century, a few indications of this assumption are found in the studied limitation of certain titles to bishops, which had been previously applied in common to all presbyters. Afterwards, the distinction became more prominent, and the bishop was held to exercise a kind of regal authority over the clergy and laity throughout the district in which he resided. The developement of this principle did not stop here: bishops of important cities assumed a power to direct and govern those of the inferior places in their neighbourhood; and this extended until a grand series of bishops, primates, archbishops, metropolitans, and patriarchs gave to the church a cumbrous, carnal, and secular government. It is admitted, that, at the time to which we now refer, this developement was not completed: it is equally certain that it had begun.

Another deteriorating influence arose from the judicial functions performed by Christian ministers. This also appears to have arisen from a usage which, in its origin, was necessary and right, although it led to fearful abuse and corruption. When Christians were first formed into separate religious societies, surrounded either by Heathens or Jews, it became a matter of great importance that any disputes or differences arising between believers, should be arranged and decided,

without having recourse to the ordinary tribunals of the land. On this subject St. Paul expostulated with the Corinthians: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" (1 Cor. vi. 1.) So important did the apostle regard this practice, that he counsels an avoidance of the usual legal process before unbelievers, at any hazard. "Why do ye not rather," says he, "take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (Verse 7.) There can be no doubt that this teaching was most extensively followed; and Christians commonly either composed their differences between themselves, or referred them to the arbitration of Christian brethren. This course had been uniformly taken by the Jews, when dispersed through Heathen countries, and began now to be generally adopted by the Christian church.

But then, who would be so likely to be applied to, for the adjudication of differences between members of the Christian church, as Christian ministers? These were undoubtedly, from the beginning, most frequently called upon to discharge this very important function. And when ministers had greatly multiplied, their leisure, freedom from secular engagements, and friendly bearing to all the members, would naturally give them almost, if not entirely, exclusive calls to this duty. When, however, the major part of the population became nominally Christian, it is easy to perceive that this sort of judicial duty must have been very great; approximating as it would in amount to all the business transacted in the law-courts of the empire.

With the church in such circumstances, a Christian emperor sits on the throne, and proceeds to consolidate the church and promote its influence by political patronage and support. What, then, was the effect of this great change? How did the favour of the imperial court affect, in this respect, the best interests of the church of Christ? This is a very important question, and deserves a careful and complete answer; which, as far as our limits will allow, shall be given.

In the first place, it will be necessary to notice the position which the emperor himself assumed with regard to the church. You should be informed, that one of the most important offices held in the government of ancient Rome was that of *Pontifex Maximus*. This officer was the chief, or president, of the College of Pontiffs, who had the charge of the religion of the empire. All matters of this kind, and of things and persons connected with public and private worship, came under their

jurisdiction. Their power was superior to that of any magistrate; indeed, in the department of religion it was supreme. This office, with many others, was held by Julius Cæsar. In fact, that wonderful man appears to have exercised supreme and arbitrary sway in a republican government, without violating the letter of its law. He did this by the curious contrivance of centring in his own person all these great offices, which had been devised as mutual checks to the exercise of power when held by different individuals. Every succeeding emperor followed his example in this respect, and exercised the authority of *Pontifex Maximus*. It will be apparent, from the nature of the case, that this change virtually superseded the power of the College of Pontiffs; for when the president was the supreme ruler of the empire, he would, as supreme pontiff, carry out his own will and policy, and not that of the inferior pontiffs.

With this knowledge before us, it becomes an important fact, that Constantine, when he as emperor declared himself a Christian, held this office of *Pontifex Maximus*. It was, indeed, the exercise of this power which gave preceding emperors the legal right to persecute the church; and it was the exercise of this same power which Constantine used in support of the Christian cause. But what was the effect of this singular patronage when exercised in the Christian church?

The answer to this question will be found in the ecclesiastical history of this and the following centuries. Its first-fruit was the convening of ecclesiastical councils by royal authority. The occasion of the first of these was the Arian heresy, of which a brief account must be given.

Arius was a Christian of Alexandria, possessing uncommon acuteness, subtilty, and energy. Although at first a very promising man, he soon began to evince instability in respect of doctrinal truth, and displayed such a restless and factious spirit, that he was twice expelled from the church. The bishop who had exercised these acts of discipline having been removed by martyrdom, Arius made submissions to his successor, and was once more restored to communion, and raised from the rank of deacon, which he then held, to that of presbyter, at Alexandria. The practice in the church of this city in respect of ministerial labour, had, by this time, become different from that of every other place of which we are informed: for, whereas, every where else, the presbyters went round in succession to the several churches to minister under the direction of the bishop, in a manner not very dissimilar from that of Wesleyan



ministers in a circuit, according to a plan prepared by the superintendent, at Alexandria each minister had a distinct congregation of his own. To his congregation Arius propounded the following doctrines; namely, "That there was a time when the Son of God was not; that he was capable of virtue or of vice; and that he was a creature, and mutable as creatures are." Reasoning and remonstrance proving insufficient to convince him that these statements contained serious errors, or to induce him to cease promulgating such erroneous doctrines, Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, summoned a synod of bishops, who considered and condemned these doctrines, and expelled Arius from the church. But this did not silence this energetic heretic. On the contrary, he propagated his notions with increasing diligence and energy; and multitudes, both of clergy and laity, received his doctrines, and condemned his expulsion as persecution. The controversy was carried on by both parties with great violence, and attracted public attention to an extent which fearfully damaged the Christian cause in the estimation of Heathen philosophers, and of the world at large. Indeed, so far was this carried, that the controversy was actually made the subject of satire in the public theatres.

The churches of Egypt and Palestine were in this state, when Constantine arrived at Nicomedia, A.D. 324, intending to proceed on a journey to the East. Hearing of this schism, the emperor wrote to the bishop of Alexandria, and also to Arius, hoping by this means to heal the breach; but he had sadly miscalculated the violence of the parties, and the length to which the poisonous leaven had extended. His efforts utterly failed. Constantine then took the resolution of calling a council from the whole Christian church. Three hundred and eighteen bishops, and many presbyters, with some deacons, assembled at Nice in Bithynia, in response to this summons; and Constantine, acting as *Pontifex Maximus*, or the supreme director of every thing pertaining to worship and religion, presided over the assembly. The result of these deliberations was, that Arius was deposed, excommunicated, and forbidden to enter Alexandria; and a standing protest against the errors of his teaching was given to the church in the Nicene creed.\*

\* This refers to the first part of the creed, as far as the words "Holy Ghost." The remaining part was added by the council of Constantinople, A.D. 581; except the words "and the Son," that follow the words, "who proceedeth from the Father," which were added by the Spanish bishops, and, after considerable demur, were allowed by the bishop of Rome, A.D. 883.

Other matters of vast importance were decided by this council. A great controversy, which had been raised as to the proper time of holding Easter, was decided. The schism of Novatian was healed, and all the differences composed which arose out of that first formal secession from the church. Several regulations were made respecting metropolitan churches. In all, twenty canons were made and published by this council.

At first the results of these decisions appear to have been salutary ; but the vacillation of the royal mind, and the extent of imperial influence in church affairs, soon produced many and great disorders. On the death of Alexander, Athanasius was appointed to succeed him as bishop of Alexandria, when he soon found that, although the council of Nice had dealt very decisively with the heresy of Arius, that evil was not destroyed. Its abettors, taught caution by their defeat, had greatly increased in energy and vigilance. At length, mainly, as is supposed, by the influence of his sister, Constantine himself was persuaded that Arius was unjustly condemned. He was, therefore, allowed to return from exile : but as Athanasius refused to receive him to communion, the whole influence of the Arian faction was brought into operation to effect the ruin of the orthodox bishop. This, indeed, was the course pursued under the influence of the court party. The decision of the Nicene council could not be formally abrogated ; but the principal supporters of the scripture doctrine were harassed and persecuted under various pretexts, until Eustathius bishop of Antioch, Asclepius of Gaza, Eutropius of Adrianople, and, at length, Athanasius also, were all driven into exile. Arius availed himself of these events to renew his efforts, and revive his influence in the church of Alexandria. These measures produced such disorder, that Constantine summoned him to Constantinople. It seems, from the best history of these times which has come down to us, that, although Constantine had been much warped in his judgment by his relations, it had rather been by a persuasion that Arius was essentially orthodox than that the doctrinal decisions of the council of Nice were incorrect. On the arrival of Arius, therefore, the emperor demanded whether he was prepared to sign the canons of the Nicene council, to which it is said he assented. Constantine then asked whether he would swear to his belief in these doctrines, to which he also assented ; and having thus subscribed and sworn, Alexander, who, notwithstanding, still regarded these professions as awfully false and hypocritical, was commanded on the next day to admit Arius to communion. On this he

spent the night in prayer, and, strange to tell, as Arius, in accordance with this arrangement, was proceeding to the church in triumph to demand this public recognition as a Christian believer, he was seized with an unnatural disease, and died suddenly.

Soon after the death of Arius, Constantine also died. On the accession of his sons, by the persevering efforts of Constans, Athanasius and other expelled bishops were restored to their sees ; but all this was done by royal power, and under regulations decreed by the emperor. We cannot survey the history of the church at this time, without perceiving undoubted proofs that Arianism was the fashionable faith, generally favoured by the rich and the great. The lamentable partiality of those classes for this insidious error, soon introduced another fearful innovation into the church. The venerable Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, died at the age of ninety-eight ; but, before his death, his friends asked him whom he would recommend as a successor : he replied, " If you want a man of exemplary life, and able to instruct you, you have Paul. If you desire a man of secular skill, and one who knows how to maintain an interest among the great, and to preserve an appearance of religion, Macedonius is preferable." The Arian interest among the clergy was exerted to effect the election of the latter ; but there still remained sufficient piety and zeal in the church of the new metropolis to secure the appointment of Paul, who was accordingly raised to the bishopric of Constantinople. This fidelity, however, failed to secure its object. The appointment displeased the emperor Constantius, who took upon himself to cancel it, and to translate Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, an able man, but a violent Arian, to the metropolitan see.

Athanasius could not tamely witness such an outrage on primitive Christianity. At the head of a hundred bishops he boldly protested against these proceedings. In consequence, a council was held at Antioch, where the utmost art of Eusebius, and the royal influence of Constantius, who attended in person, were exerted to insure the triumph of the Arian faction, and the condemnation of Athanasius ; and they succeeded. This eminent man was obliged to retire to Rome ; and Gregory, a Cappadocian, was appointed to succeed him as bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius, however, was so much beloved by his flock, and Arianism was so very unpopular, that violence had to be used to place the new bishop in the office to which he had been appointed. The aid of the prefect of Egypt was required ; and imprisonment, scourging, and even death, were inflicted by



this professedly Christian government on those Christians who, faithful to the teaching of an enlightened judgment, persisted in honouring Jesus as "God over all."

During these troubles the church in the western provinces of the empire, however deficient in evangelical purity and primitive simplicity, adhered with fidelity to the doctrine of holy scripture. Julius, bishop of Rome, not only received and protected Athanasius, but, in a council of the western bishops, held in that city, the conduct of this exile and of his fellow-sufferers was amply justified, and an appeal made to the whole eastern church on behalf of the truth, and of those who suffered for conscience' sake. These measures led to the holding of a general council at Sardica, on the borders of the east and western divisions of the empire, by the joint order of Constantius and Constans; the latter being as steadfast a supporter of the scriptural faith, as his brother was of Arianism. The intention of this meeting was to unite the entire church; but its issue was the reverse. Feeling themselves unable to carry out their views, the Arian party withdrew from the council, which forthwith enacted several canons, justifying Athanasius, and devising some useful checks to the evils which existed. On the other hand, the eastern bishops met at Philopolis, and excommunicated the prelates of the west. Meanwhile, the orthodox in the eastern provinces were grievously persecuted.

On the death of Gregory, who had been placed in the see of Alexandria, Constantius, influenced by the earnest advocacy of his brother, (who is said to have proceeded so far as to threaten war, if the existing abuses were not removed,) invited Athanasius to return to his bishopric; which he did: and although Arianism still triumphed in other parts of the eastern empire, this measure had a healing and salutary effect.

The assassination of Constans, and the suicide of his murderer Magnentius, having placed the whole empire under the power of Constantius, he was induced again to endeavour to render the Arian cause paramount throughout the world. For this purpose he convened a council at Milan, which he attended in person, and actually proposed an Arian creed for adoption. This was, however, rejected by the people, and withdrawn; but the condemnation of Athanasius was again insisted on; and when aged and eminent bishops argued against it, the royal reply was, "I do not ask your advice: obey, or be banished." When, as their last resource, they appealed from their sovereign to the judgment of God, the frantic ruler actually drew his sword on them: exile, tortures, and death were again dealt

out to the people who dared to obey God rather than man.

On the death of Constantius, who died soon after these events, Julian, generally surnamed "the apostate," succeeded to the empire; and with him, for the last time, the reign of Pagan superstition was in the ascendant. Rich in talent, and possessing great energy and courage, this prince exerted himself to the utmost, during a reign of three years, to restore the worship of the Heathen deities, and to re-establish the ancient superstition. His first measures for this end began with a decree for universal religious toleration, which enabled all the exiled bishops to return to their homes. This rather auspicious step was, however, followed by a bitter and bloody persecution of the Christian cause; in which, notwithstanding the laxity of the times, great numbers perished.

With Jovian, who succeeded to the empire on the death of Julian, the persecution was stayed, Christianity was again fostered and protected, and the exiles recalled: even the venerable Athanasius, whom Julian refused to allow to minister at Alexandria, was restored to his flock; and, so far as a mild and tolerant patronage could do it, orthodox Christianity was favoured by the imperial power.

We have now, my dear brethren, proceeded far enough to learn the general effect of imperial patronage on the Christian cause. As the first companies of believers were united together, under the influence of Divine love, and a strong desire to glorify Christ, and disseminate on every side his great salvation, there was no place for earthly motives or influences, for human honour, wealth, or aggrandisement. They were, in fact, a spiritually-minded community, gathered out of the world as a leaven of holiness, charged with the glorious mission of imbuing all mankind with the same salvation; and all the organization was adopted, and all the ministers and officers were appointed and employed, under the guidance of the Spirit, and for the same great purpose. How, then, were this character and these objects promoted by imperial patronage and courtly influence? The only answer which the question can receive is this: "Most injuriously." So far as the conversion of Constantine tended to free the church from persecution, and to allow the gospel unfettered access to the millions of men composing the Roman empire, it was undoubtedly a great blessing. But when a sovereign, as such, claimed to influence the councils of the ministers of Christ, and to legislate respecting the faith of the church, an evil was introduced more mischievous in its character,

and more deadly in its effects, than the most fiery persecution. It is not, however, in the immediate and direct results of such political interference that we are to seek for the most serious of its consequences ; but rather in that worldly-minded spirit, and those carnal and political usages, which would indirectly arise from these causes, and undermine, and ultimately destroy, the efficiency of the gospel.

We shall best discern the effect of these influences, if we direct our attention to the state of the church after it had for some time received royal patronage and support.

In respect of doctrine, error had as yet made but little progress, except in those places affected by Arianism. This was, indeed, a fearful departure from the truth, and exerted an influence far and wide. Yet the great majority of Christian churches still adhered to the doctrines of holy scripture respecting the Deity of Jesus. In other respects the essential doctrines of the gospel were maintained. The canon of scripture was preserved unalloyed by the introduction of the apocryphal books ; and the sacred records were held to afford a sufficient rule of faith and morals. It was also most distinctly stated, that no one, the Son of God only excepted, not even the Virgin Mary, was born free from original sin and its desert. Justification was declared to be by faith alone, through the righteousness of Christ ; but not without holiness of life, in opposition to the merit of good works. The doctrine of the efficacy of the death and blood of Christ, and his satisfaction for the sin of mankind, was believed ; the grace of God, as the originating cause of the salvation of the human race, which was bestowed without any merit of man, was equally received ; while the necessity of good works was strenuously enforced. The sacrament of the Lord's supper was still administered in both kinds to every communicant, and the bread and wine were regarded as unchanged, simple elements after consecration, but treated with reverence, as set apart for a holy purpose.

Nothing was known at this period of a purgatory after this life ; nor is any cleansing from the guilt of sin mentioned by the fathers, except through the blood or atonement of Christ. The great elements of Popery, such as transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, auricular confession, the seven sacraments, the treasury of indulgences, the worship of angels, and the adoration of the eucharist, had not yet been introduced.

Nevertheless, additions, corruptions, and superstitions had been brought into operation, which opened and prepared the way for all these evils.



The arrangements of the church were no longer devised to promote its spiritual prosperity and extension by the conversion of souls, but were modelled on the plan of the secular government. The empire being divided into eastern and western, the church was also so divided. The eastern church contained seven dioceses ; two in Illyricum, and five in the East. In like manner, the western church contained seven dioceses ; four in Italy, and three in Gaul. All these archbishops and bishops were arranged according to a certain gradation of order, each possessing the same relative dignity as was enjoyed by their respective cities. The city of Rome being first in rank, as the ancient capital of the empire, the bishop of Rome stood first in order ; the bishop of Constantinople occupied the next rank, as belonging to the new eastern capital ; Alexandria was the third ; Antioch, the fourth. Thus were introduced into the church all the ambition, contention, and rivalry, of a secular and political kind, which had previously existed between these cities.

Further : reference has been made to the origin and extent to which Christian bishops had been led to adjudicate in case of dispute and injury between members of their churches. The principal reason of this was, that they might not be compelled to go to law before unbelievers. When, therefore, the head of the state became Christian, and the institutions of the empire were being moulded on a Christian basis, the great necessity for this practice was entirely done away. Yet, strange to say, instead of removing all this weight of secular duty from the bishops, now that the reason for it had disappeared, Constantine made a law, that "the sentence of the bishop should in every case be final, and that the civil magistrate should be obliged to execute it ; that if, in any cause pending in a civil court, either party should appeal to the bishop, the cause should be immediately transferred to his court, notwithstanding the protest of the other party ; and that from the decision of the bishop there should be no appeal." Thus was the principal minister in every city placed in the position of a secular judge, and encumbered with an immense amount of labour, influence, and power, as alien from his proper duty and profession as the command of an army.

These measures sealed and confirmed the monarchical principle in the government of the church. Bishops now ruled in their dioceses with a kind of regal sway. Nor did their government merely affect the spiritual affairs of the church. Numerous secular matters had become a part of their usual

duty ; whilst, beneath the bishop, offices in a regular gradation were multiplied, which removed the church still further from its spiritual simplicity. There were presbyters, deacons, subdeacons, exorcists, catechists, readers, and singers. Indeed, the power of the bishops had now become so great, that they generally ruled as supreme, except when controlled by imperial influence. For it is clear, from the testimony of all the ecclesiastical historians of this time, that Constantine, and many of his successors, exercised considerable power in the church. He acted quite in keeping with the office he sustained in the Heathen state as *Pontifex Maximus* ; for he convoked councils, and presided at them ; he elevated bishops, composed contentions, reformed abuses, admitted appeals, constituted judges in ecclesiastical causes, deposed the contumacious clergy, and made laws according to his own will in respect of religious rites, &c.

Although, as yet, Heathenism continued to exist, and even under Julian again struggled for ascendancy, a circumstance which greatly checked the importation of Heathen rites and usages into the church ; it is very certain that, during this century, the rites of the church were multiplied to an astonishing extent. A desire to conciliate the favour of the Heathen by external appearance was one prolific cause of this change ; but there were others : ecclesiastics had been raised to wealth and dignity ; so that what perfectly accorded with the beautiful simplicity of the primitive church, was now quite out of place. Costly and elegant places of worship had been erected at Jerusalem, Constantinople, Rome, Antioch, Nicomedia, Bethlehem, and other places. Amongst the superstitious rites which had been introduced, we may enumerate the use of aromatic incense during the time of public prayers, and of wax lights on vigils, as well in as out of the churches. These vigils were, indeed, amongst the most remarkable and questionable of the additions made about this time to the service of the church. They were nocturnal assemblies held in the night preceding some great feast, such as Easter. This vigil was the most remarkable, and the churches were in many places gorgeously illuminated. There was also introduced, about this period, a class of regulations enjoining a strict abstinence from certain sorts of food, such as meat, vegetables, wine, &c., during the fasts. But the most important and extensive innovation was that respecting the peculiar sanctity of celibacy. This had, indeed, risen into influence in the preceding century ; but now, although still many in all the orders of the priesthood were married men, the notion was fast progressing that

any elevated attainments in holiness were entirely incompatible with matrimonial union. A superstitious reverence was also at this time indulged for the relics of holy men, especially of martyrs; and strenuous efforts were put forth to collect the bones of such, or any thing pertaining to them, and to place them in cities and in churches, where great virtue was ascribed to them. Chrysostom regards the martyrs' bones, buried on the walls of Constantinople, as an ample defence of the city against all enemies. In fact, martyrs were regarded as spiritually present in their tombs: pilgrimages were therefore made to them, and the practice of invoking saints, and especially martyrs, may be traced to this period. A superstitious veneration was now also ascribed to the form of the cross, figures of which began to be placed on the communion-table, and in different other parts of the church, and a certain efficacy began to be ascribed to it. Prayers were not only offered for the dead, under the notion already mentioned, but supplications began to be made for the souls in hell, that their punishment might be mitigated. Extravagant virtue was ascribed to the sacraments. Baptism was regarded as having such a saving power that it was frequently delayed until the person was near death: Constantine himself is said to have acted in this manner. The eucharist was regarded in a similar way, and supposed to convey such saving virtue as to be placed sometimes in the mouth of the dead body.

It is deeply painful to prosecute such an inquiry as this. Nothing can exceed the glorious display of Divine love and power as revealed in the gospel, and brought into full operation at the day of Pentecost. The further triumphs of this grace in the conversion of souls, and in rearing up a ministry, daring every temporal danger, spread the knowledge of Christ throughout the world. Yet, although we see this gospel triumphant in opposition to bloody persecution, fire, and death, and in its dignified and rational simplicity defeating the power of kings, and turning into folly the mightiest efforts of Gentile learning; we are doomed to see this Divine energy, which neither earth nor hell could resist, adulterated, paralysed, destroyed by childish follies and absurd superstitions. Yes, we see the pride of power, the love of splendour and show, with the most absurd superstitions, unite to mar the efficiency of the greatest gift ever given by God to man.

We have now to trace, in rapid succession, the principal circumstances in the history of the church after the death of Jovian. This prince was succeeded by two brothers, Valen-



tinian and Valens : the former ruled in the West, the latter in the East. Valentinian, a man of some capacity, followed in the course of policy pursued by Jovian ; while Valens, a weak-minded prince, allowed himself to be so influenced by Eudoxius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, that the mischievous and cruel policy of Constantius was virtually continued in the East. To such an extent, indeed, was this persecution carried, that all orthodox Christians were banished from Constantinople, and all places of worship were closed. During this reign a council was held at Laodicea. The proceedings of that assembly cast important light on the state of the church and the progress of degeneracy. One of their canons prohibits the ordination of persons recently baptized : a very proper rule, but one which shows that the unreasonable practice must have extensively obtained to demand such a means of checking it. This measure, with other circumstances, warrants the fear that it was not very uncommon for persons to profess Christianity, and to be baptized, in order that they might have an appointment in the Christian ministry. Another canon prohibited the election of ministers by the people, and transferred the power of their appointment to the bishops. This measure was a developement of the principles introduced into the church by Constantine, and which finally placed all ecclesiastical power in the hands of the superior clergy. This council further enacted, that ministers should not lend money upon usury, nor visit taverns or places of entertainment, nor assist at the public shows which frequently accompanied marriages and festivals. The invocation of angels was also solemnly prohibited. And presbyters were forbidden to practise magic or enchantment. Deacons were forbidden to sit in the presence of a priest without his leave ; and ministers and monks were forbidden to wash in the same baths with women. All these regulations, however proper and useful, clearly indicate the prevalence of fatal error, and the existence of dissoluteness of manners, even among those called “ministers of Christ.”

Valens, being in Scythia, commanded the presence of a bishop to communicate with him and his Arian attendants. This the prelate—very probably from conscientious motives—declined to do ; upon which the indignant emperor ordered his immediate banishment. Soon afterward the Arian bishop of Constantinople died, when the Arians elected another in his stead, and Valens approved of their choice. The orthodox, however, also elected a bishop ; upon which the emperor banished him, and the bishop who had dared to ordain him.

This measure greatly excited the Christian population of the country; and eighty ecclesiastics were sent to the emperor at Nicomedia to complain of this conduct; when the tyrant, enraged at their presumption, ordered them to be secretly put to death. They were accordingly placed in a vessel, and sent to sea, when the ship was set on fire, and abandoned by the crew. Providence did not allow this iniquity to be concealed. A strong west wind drove the ship on the coast of Bithynia; so that, although it was burned, and the ministers destroyed, the fact became known to the world. On the death of Athanasius, A.D. 373, imperial power placed an Arian bishop in his stead, and persecuted the faithful of that city with banishment, torture, and death. During the reign of Valentinian, the celebrated Ambrose was appointed bishop of Milan, through whose zealous efforts Arianism was effectually expelled from Italy.

Gratian succeeded his father Valentinian as emperor of the west, and evinced more sincere piety than we have yet found in any Roman sovereign. From the days of Constantine, the emperors had, under the Heathen title of *Pontifex Maximus*, or chief priest, assumed the highest rank in the Christian church, and appeared in the peculiar robes of that office. With discernment and judgment which ought to have shamed the ecclesiastics of his day, Gratian denounced the practice as altogether idolatrous, and refused to assume the functions or the habit of that office. This emperor appointed Theodosius as his colleague, to rule in the East; and he also began his reign with an evident desire to promote the best interests of the church. Gratian was assassinated after a very short reign; and Theodosius, surmounting every obstacle and danger throughout a stormy season of ten years, at length acquired supreme dominion over the whole empire, A.D. 394. His reign was signalised by the formal prohibition of Paganism by law. He made it a capital crime to sacrifice, to attend Pagan rites, to consult the entrails of beasts, or to use incense or perfumes, as formally practised in Heathen worship. This was the death-blow of Paganism in the Roman empire. The emperor did not wish to make Heathen martyrs, nor did *they* desire such a distinction: so, although Christianity, as a religion of God's appointment, led thousands to die for its truth, and was maintained in vigorous influence through many years of the most furious persecution, Heathenism expired without an effort or a martyr.

Yet this outward and formal triumph of the Christian church

over Heathenism was any thing but favourable to real religion. Its presence as a rival religion seemed to keep in check, at least in some degree, that rash desire for innovation then so prevalent. When this was removed, the course of Christian deterioration, which had long been in operation, seemed to riot onward without let or hinderance. Then the names, anniversary days, and relics of martyrs, rapidly took the place of the exploded Heathen deities. Then pictures and statues were introduced into the churches, and they were soon regarded with a religious respect which bordered on idolatrous devotion. The Christian priesthood, as they now claimed to be called, not only acquired increasing wealth by securing in many places the funds and revenues of Heathen temples, and additional honour and respect by occupying the unrivalled position of being the clergy of the empire, but also assumed a dignity to which Heathen priests never made pretensions. A measure of ecclesiastical ambition seems to have pervaded the church, of which it is difficult for us to form any adequate conception. What, for instance, must have been the extent of this arrogance, when Martin, bishop of Tours, sitting at the imperial table, could gravely contend that a presbyter was superior in rank to an emperor? If so, what must have been his ideal of the dignity of a bishop?

Two great means of promoting this clerical ambition, and of carrying out its objects, were, about this time, vastly augmented. The first of these was the extension of the monarchical principle in the church by the appointment of patriarchs; a title which was then assumed by the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and, through courtesy, Jerusalem. These exercised supreme ecclesiastical authority in their several provinces. Councils and synods sometimes overruled the power of these patriarchs; and the emperors still claimed the right of convoking ecclesiastical assemblies, hearing appeals in respect of church-affairs, framing laws, and disposing of ecclesiastical dignities; and this the most powerful and successful of the emperors frequently did. But the troubled state of the empire, and the numerous claims of war and policy, drew off their attention to a great extent from ecclesiastical matters, and left the supreme power virtually in the hands of the metropolitans.

Another means by which this extravagant clerical power was sustained, is found in the vast increase of monastics, who were constantly favoured by the superior clergy, and in return promoted their objects and views with almost boundless zeal. An



able church-historian has described this state of things in the following words :—"The false piety of miserable devotees had made the function of the clergy a very desirable thing ; and introduced a horde of idle and vicious men into the church, among whom saints sprung up as mushrooms ; and to these the stupid vulgar looked up, as to the highly favoured of the Deity. The monks, like a cloud of locusts, covered the face of the earth ; and, regimented under diverse leaders, served to support the dignity of the church, and to afford from their body a most abundant supply for the vacant sees. Convents multiplied throughout the Christian world, vaunted by the spirit of the times as among the most meritorious of deeds."

In the fifth century the cause of religion was greatly retarded in England by the Saxon conquest of all the eastern coast of the island, and the establishment, by these means, of Heathenism throughout the greater part of the country. On the other hand, we read of whole nations being converted to the faith of Christ ; and among these we may reckon Ireland, Burgundy, and the Franks.

The ancient doctrines of the gospel were still maintained, although in many respects fearfully checked in their influence by prevailing corruptions. In this age a large portion of the Apocrypha was recognised as holy scripture. We also find the bishops of Rome exerting themselves to the utmost to establish a right to hear appeals from the bishops of other districts. Zosimus attempted to effect this by producing a spurious canon, which, he alleged, had been enacted at the Nicene council. The cheat was, however, discovered, and the claim disallowed.

The great heresy of this age was that of Pelagius, who taught " that there was no imputation of original sin to any man, nor any original corruption consequent on the fall : that Adam was mortal in his nature and condition before his transgression, and that death was not the punishment of sin : that the strength of free-will and of human nature is uncorrupt or entire, and sufficient for the beginning of every good work, for the prosecution of it, and for perseverance in it ; and that man can will and perform whatever is good ; hence, that it is of God that we are men, but of ourselves that we are just : that there are three ways of salvation ; namely, by the law of nature, by the law of Moses, and by the law of Christ : that the works of the Heathen were good and acceptable to God, although performed without the aid of Divine grace : that perfection was attainable in this life.

either actual, so that believers did not sin, or possible, that they might live without sin."

These insidious tenets were received by great numbers of persons in different countries; and many who did not go the full length of these sentiments were warped from the pure truth of the gospel by ascribing an unscriptural purity or energy to human nature. By these means, the divisions and schisms which preceding errors had introduced into the church were perpetuated and multiplied.

Brief as our sketch of these times must necessarily be, we cannot contemplate the introduction of such changes, superstitions, and errors into the church without staying a moment to notice their moral and religious effects. We touch only on a very few points, which, however, will be seen to afford a key to the state of religious society as it then existed.

Monachism had become so general, and virginity and celibacy so highly honoured, that the married state was regarded as something impure, and as, in fact, only a tolerated evil. What was viewed as pious practice, therefore, according to the erroneous notions then entertained, was not based on explicit revelation, or moral consciousness, and could, consequently, only be considered as a series of arbitrary, human, and despotic commands. And as these were not observed by the people at large, and, in fact, could not be, the notion obtained of a twofold virtue; the one higher, which was monkish; the other lower, as seen in common life. There is, however, one thing very observable in the developement of these doctrines; namely, that the more these notions of excessive purity and severity were urged and honoured, the more lax became the obligations of veracity. This is fully exemplified in the teaching of the most eminent of the fathers of this age; as if an affectation of superhuman virtue required a corresponding release from the demands of truth.

But, what is even of yet graver moment, the morals of the clergy were open to great exception. Ecclesiastical offices were then no longer attended with danger, but, on the contrary, opened a highway to wealth, honour, and power; and, consequently, all the arts of unworthy flattery and low intrigue were put in requisition to obtain them, and to rise from a lower to a higher station. In this way, not only did many unprepared, but actually many immoral, persons push their way into the clerical office; while an objectionable worldly spirit pervaded the whole order. And as monkish virtue was deemed essential, and many external things were thought necessary to

evidence spirituality of mind, a low hypocrisy became the distinguishing feature of the clerical order. Of course, there were noble exceptions to these fearful charges; men who evinced a high zeal for morals, and dared to rebuke sin wherever it was found; but these were so few, as to prove that the reverse was the general character of their order.

Whilst the church was in this state, the clergy received from the emperor Justinian, A.D. 539, an increase of influence of the most extraordinary kind. He gave the bishop, in addition to his ecclesiastical rights and functions, civil jurisdiction over monks, nuns, and the inferior clergy; making it also the duty of the bishops to undertake the care of prisoners, minors, insane persons, foundlings, stolen children, and oppressed women; and, at the same time, investing them with authority to uphold good morals, and to insure the impartial administration of justice. It is easy to see the vast amount of influence which these regulations gave to the episcopal order throughout the empire.

Whilst extensive power and influence were thus showered on the church from without, the career of fatal innovation was going on within it, with increased recklessness. Prayers to saints and angels were common. Temples were dedicated to them almost every where; so that the old charge which Christians had so effectually urged against the ancient Heathens,—that they worshipped dead men,—might now be with equal force retorted on themselves. The public use of images had also become general; the veneration of relics, and the adoption of the doctrine of purgatory, were all but universal. The increase of ceremonies in public worship still continued; every episcopal whim or fancy found scope in some new usage or ceremony; the public mind was therefore constantly kept alive, whilst every gorgeous appearance that could be devised was imported into the sacred service of the church. All these were, however, transcended by two grand novelties. The first of these was the idolatrous veneration of the Virgin, who began to be styled “Mother of God.” Litanies, which had been previously addressed only to God, were now presented to her. The other was the invention of the atoning character of the Lord’s supper, or “mass,” as it was then called; and it was believed that the sacrifice which was pretended to be thus offered to God, would mitigate the purifying sufferings which the dead were imagined to be enduring. In consequence of this notion, masses for the dead became common, and tended much to exalt the clergy, who, in the opinion of the common



people, possessed the power thus to give salvation to the living and the dead : this ultimately became a means which tended greatly to enrich the church ; for these masses were afterwards in such request as not to be obtained except by purchase.

The progress of power in the church had now proceeded so far, that the patriarch of Constantinople in the East, and of Rome in the West, reigned like two princes in their respective provinces ; the one too proud to bear an equal, the other to own a superior. The term *œcumenical* or “universal” bishop had been repeatedly applied to both of them by the emperors. Yet when this title was given to the patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory of Rome was so incensed, that he denounced it in the strongest terms, and declared, “I am bold to say, that, whosoever uses or affects the style of ‘universal bishop’ has the pride and character of Antichrist, and is, in some measure, his harbinger in this haughty quality of mounting himself above the rest of his order. And, indeed, both the one and the other seem to split upon the same rock. For as pride makes Antichrist strain his pretensions up to Godhead, so whoever is ambitious to be called the only or ‘universal prelate’ prefers himself to a distinguishing superiority, and rises as it were upon the ruins of the rest.”

This statement is as sensible as it is important. It shows the views which a strong-minded person, who had studied the subject, entertained respecting the character of the predicted Antichrist. But, notwithstanding the plainness and force of this explicit declaration, only two years after the death of Gregory, Boniface, who succeeded to the bishopric after the short episcopate of Sabinian, A.D. 606, having hailed the accession of the emperor Phocas as an auspicious event, was complimented by that brutal and lustful tyrant with the title of “universal bishop ;” and, instead of relinquishing the appellation as a significant badge of Antichrist, he seized it with the utmost avidity : from that day to the present time, this has been the uniform designation of the bishop of Rome. And, as if to prove that nothing was sufficient to satisfy the cravings of this ecclesiastical ambition, the title, which was at first received as a favour from Phocas, was soon after not only claimed as a matter of right, but the bishops of Rome actually put forth the arrogant assumption, that, as successors of Peter, they were not only entitled to universal ecclesiastical supremacy, but were also, by virtue of the same succession, possessed of universal temporal power.

The circumstances of the times gave effect to this assump-

tion, which, at any other period of the world's history, would have only provoked ridicule and contempt. Successive migrations of the barbarous Northmen had completely broken down the imperial power. The Saxons in Britain were independent ; so were the Franks in Gaul. The Visigoths ruled in Spain ; the Saracens and Turks were desolating the eastern provinces and threatening Constantinople. The imposture of Mohammed was just then being concocted ; whilst, throughout the whole world, there was no body so compactly organised as the Christian church. With a regular gradation of clergy, sustained every where by an innumerable army of monks, cemented together in all lands by a common bond of union, there was only wanting a head, possessing daring and energy sufficient to give unity to the mass, in order to make it the seat and centre of universal power. This was found in the bishop of Rome ; and an opportunity soon offered for carrying out into action these arrogant and absurd claims. Childeric III. then reigned in France : he appears to have been a weak and indolent prince, taking little or no share in the burdensome duties of government ; these being performed with great energy and ability by his minister, Pepin, who had only the simple title of mayor of the palace. But, as is generally the case, this officer thirsted for the style and title, as well as the power, of government. For this purpose Pepin convoked the states of the realm ; who, although devoted to his interest, gave it as their opinion that before the sovereign could be deposed, the views of the bishop of Rome should be ascertained as to the lawfulness of such an act. A statement of the case was accordingly drawn up, of course, in agreement with the views of Pepin, and submitted to the Roman pontiff, who, as might be expected, returned a favourable answer. Upon this the unhappy king was stripped of his royalty without opposition, and the usurping minister was seated on the throne in his stead. This decision of the bishop of Rome was confirmed by his successor, who had, in consequence of the unsettled state of Italy, travelled into France, to solicit assistance against the Lombards : whilst there, he not only formally absolved Pepin from the oath of allegiance which he had taken to Childeric, but actually crowned him the second time, together with his wife and his two sons ; thus giving to the throne of the usurper the highest sanction which the professed head of the church on earth could bestow, and to this extent affording legitimacy to his descendants on the throne of France. In the eyes of an ignorant and fanatical people, this was of infinite moment to the family of Pepin ; and they were not ungrateful.



Charlemagne, his son and successor, raised the bishops of Rome to the rank of temporal sovereigns, by conferring on them successively the Greek exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of Lombardy, and the state of Rome. Nothing in the wide range of human history is more marvellous than the manner in which these successive acquisitions were received. As a question of human policy, it would be thought that such success would satiate even ambition, and lead to confidence and exultation. There has, however, always been connected with the papacy a grasp at infinity of power ; and every element secured is but a stepping-stone to something greater. On this occasion, instead of applauding the liberality of the French king, a forged deed was produced, which professed to show that Constantine, the first Christian emperor, had given to the bishop of Rome the sovereignty of Rome, Italy, and the western provinces : so that this gift, as soon as received, was represented as only an instalment of that which had for centuries belonged to the church, and been wrongfully withheld from it. The dignity, therefore, as soon as it existed, was invested with the character of ancient legitimacy. A similar reciprocity of kindness occurred in the next reign. Charlemagne was solemnly crowned emperor of the West by the bishop of Rome, who, in return, protected him from his disaffected subjects by a powerful army. The cup of clerical assumption was at length filled ; for at Pavia, A.D. 878, Charles consented to receive the empire as avowedly the gift of the pope.

It will now be necessary for us to contemplate the Papacy in its complete form. Its essential principle was to embody all ecclesiastical and political power under one head. This was done. And it is remarkable how exactly prophecy was fulfilled in this instance. (Dan. vii. 8.) Daniel had predictively represented the four great empires by four great beasts. The last of these must therefore represent the Roman empire. The ten horns are ten kingdoms into which this empire was divided ; (verse 24 ;) the little horn is a power *diverse* from the others, and he obtains dominion over three kingdoms. We need not particularize, even in outline. Nothing can possibly be more exact than the fulfilment of this prediction, in the rise of the Papacy to regal temporal dominion ; a fact which is perpetuated to the present day by the Roman pontiff still wearing a triple crown, a perpetual proof of his being the scriptural Antichrist.

The same may be said of the sum total of innovation which had been introduced into the doctrines, worship, and morals of the church. In respect of doctrine, the most fatal and insidi-



ous course possible was adopted. The truth of the gospel was not primarily assailed, but error was introduced. The Divinity of Christ, his atonement, and salvation through his merit, were continued as doctrines taught, and to be believed. But then, the sacraments given by priestly hands were said to possess saving power; the eucharist, indeed, to afford a positive atonement. Jesus Christ was still the great Mediator; but his mother was all but equally honoured, and was, indeed, a more popular object of worship. Nor were saints and angels excluded from the office which holy scripture declares to be the prerogative of the Son of God alone. The merit of Christ was still held to possess saving power; but then the fires of purgatory also purified from sin; and from these fires, the prayers of priests could save men for a money payment: so that *cash* could supersede Christ's merits altogether. In fact, although truth remained, to some considerable extent, undenied, it was buried and superseded. It remained, but was not taught. The doctrines propounded and inculcated throughout Christendom were such as these: The pope's supremacy,—the worship of images,—the invocation of saints,—the pains of purgatory,—prayers and masses for the dead,—the virtue and worship of relics,—the necessity of celibacy,—the merit of monachism,—abstaining from flesh and confession to a priest;—these were the doctrines and practices incessantly enforced, and to which alone the minds of the people were directed.

In consequence of this assumption of universal supremacy, an entire separation took place between the eastern and western churches. The ecclesiastical authorities at Constantinople would never recognise the spiritual supremacy of the bishop of Rome. It was not, however, avowedly on this account that the separation took place. A long and bitter controversy had previously arisen respecting the introduction of images into churches; which measure was favoured by the bishop of Rome, and violently opposed by the bishop of Constantinople. Different views also obtained respecting the procession of the Holy Ghost. At length the head of the eastern church insisted not only on the expulsion of images in his own diocese, but also at Rome. This issued in the mutual excommunication of the two bishops, and the total separation of the two sections of the church: that of the West henceforth became the seat of the Papacy; whilst the East was known as the Greek church, and is now the depositary of the faith of Greece, of many Christians in various parts of the Turkish dominions, and of the Russian empire. This church is scarcely less corrupt than the Popish.

It denies the authority of the pope, maintains that the church of Rome is not the only true church, disclaims infallibility, works of supererogation and indulgences, rejects the doctrine of purgatory ; but admits prayers for the dead. Trine immersion in baptism is employed ; chrism or anointing with oil immediately follows baptism. The eucharist is administered in both kinds, the bread being dipped in wine, or wine and water. Auricular confession is not regarded as enjoined by Divine command, but is practised, accompanied by absolution. A secondary homage is paid to the Virgin Mary and saints. Paintings and shrines are used in worship, and matrimony is regarded as a sacrament. These are the distinguishing features of the eastern or Greek church. It will not be necessary for us to refer at any length to this portion of the Christian world. Its history is replete with disorder and convulsion, sedition and bloodshed, and will not repay the trouble of investigation.

Returning to the church of the West, we have to trace its developement and character somewhat further. It was not to be supposed, that the temporal sovereignty over three minor states could satisfy desires so vast as those entertained by the bishops of Rome : we have already shown that they aspired to universal sovereignty, and, indeed, to a super-human dignity on earth. Testimonies in proof of this might be multiplied. Innocent III., in his sermon on the coronation of the pope, thus speaks : "The church, which is my spouse, does not, at her marriage with me, come empty-handed : she has bestowed a precious, an invaluable dowry on me ;—an absolute power in spirituals, an extensive authority in temporals. She has given me the mitre for the ensign of my spiritual, and the crown of my temporal, jurisdiction ; the mitre as priest, the crown as king ; constituting me His vicar, who bears this inscription written on His thigh and His vestment : 'The King of kings, and Lord of lords.' " Carrying out these views, pope Nicholas actually gives himself the title of "God," which is to be found in the Decretal : "It is very plain that the pope can neither be bound nor loosed by any secular power ; for it appears, as we have remarked above, that he was styled 'GOD' by the pious emperor Constantine ; and it is manifest that GOD cannot be judged by men." Nor was this blasphemous assumption confined to a solitary random assertion, or enthusiastic statement : on the contrary, it was taught, received, and acted on. Observe the following language, used by Cardinal Perron, speaking to Clement VIII. : "There is none of those whom your holiness has promoted to the sacred cardinalate, who embraces,

reveres, and *adores* your beatitude with more affection than I do." So that this impious arrogance of the Papacy forms a perfect fulfilment of another scripture prophecy: "The son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.)

In this manner the Papacy not only claimed to sit in the supreme tribunal: it went beyond this, and moulded the laws according to its own will. Thus we find Baronius addressing the Venetians in the following language: "Whence do you derive authority to judge the judge of all, whom no council, however lawfully assembled, has dared to judge?" Again: the same cardinal proclaims, that "if the pope neglects his own salvation, and draws by troops along with him innumerable people to hell, there to be eternally beaten with many stripes; yet no mortal ought to have the presumption to reprehend his faults, since he who ought to judge all others cannot himself be judged of any one."

Thus we see that the church, as presented to us in the Papacy, exhibits an individual man enthroned as God, setting himself above all human investigation or reproof, even although he should by his wickedness be preparing to descend into hell himself, and by his influence to be conducting others thither! Well might the Holy Ghost predict this spiritual tyranny by asking, "Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" Well might it be said that the effect of this blasphemous assumption was, that "they worshipped the beast." (Rev. xiii. 4.)

Before we pass along from the consideration of this fearful spiritual enormity, let me urge on your attention, my dear brethren, those elements of error which constituted the body of Antichrist. You have been informed in the preceding discussion, that the truth of God was not at first and directly opposed; but that insidious errors were added to the truth. Men were taught that the communication of grace depended on certain acts to be performed by certain men; that various additions to the simple worship of primitive times were fitting and salutary; that celibacy and virginity were in themselves graces, and thus a factitious virtue was introduced. By these means, the truth of God was buried and neutralized, until the most fearful results were every where apparent. Not only had all appearance of spiritual religion departed from the church, but Christianity had utterly failed, if regarded simply as a system



of morals. This was the result of the errors which had been introduced. The simplicity and spirituality of the gospel had been forsaken; justification by faith in Christ had faded away from the teaching of Christian ministers; the personal experience of gracious influence by Christian believers had ceased to be a distinguishing feature of the Christian profession; whilst ascetic celibacy was extolled as angelic perfection, and a magical efficacy was ascribed to the sacraments and priestly acts.

A careful consideration of the whole case fully convinces me, that these facts greatly affected and oppressed the leading ministers of the church. On this account Augustine remonstrated, wept, groaned, trembled, preached, wrote; and Salvian, following close on his steps, mournfully walks over the ruins of the Christian world, and when he comes to Carthage finds it the home of every unclean thing. A reform was seen to be essential, or Christianity must be admitted to be a failure. Two courses were open to the heads of the church. They might have returned to the simple and mighty truths of the gospel, as proclaimed in holy scripture; they might have gone back to the manners, preaching, and spiritual piety of the apostles; but then the clergy must have renounced the presumed legerdemain efficacy of their acts, and have abandoned the worldly pride, and pomp, and power for which they had so earnestly struggled. This course was not taken. Another means was resorted to: the destinies of the world trembled in the balance: *the dragon gave power to the beast*: earth and hell prevailed, and a dark, dense night of error set in on the church and the world.

This language is very strong; but it is amply justified. The sacrifices which the prevailing evils demanded were not made, the requirements of the cause of Divine truth were not met. The superior clergy saw Christian society rapidly merging into the Heathenism and idolatry from which it had been extricated. They saw that some reform was indispensable to the continued existence of the Christian church. An effort was made proportionate to the crisis. But, instead of bringing back the simple truth of scripture, they recognised the principles of an earthly and carnal policy. The safety of the church was sought in a more extensive and elaborate organization of the hierarchy; and this so far met the case as to interpose a formidable barrier to the spread of outward immorality, and society, as such, was consolidated and preserved: but as the principles of action were earthly, the results were unhallowed and pernicious.

Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable than the adaptation of the fully-developed system of Popery to the political and external objects for which it was designed. Let it be remembered that this took place at a time when the old Roman empire was crumbling into fragments, and while the barbarian Northmen on the one hand, and the infuriated Moslem hosts on the other, were desolating the nations. Then, and under these circumstances, a scheme of ecclesiastical polity was brought into operation, avowedly under the highest possible sanction, not limited to any country, or class of society, or rank in life, but freely offering to talent and energy, whether found in the courts of princes, or in the cowherd's shed, a means, not merely of having a place in the Christian ministry, but of having this with an unlimited prospect of progressive elevation to a degree of wealth, honour, and power which looked down on emperors and kings as creatures of a meaner species, and enabled them who were thus raised to revel even on earth in the attributes of God. Such prospects not only lured the best talent and energy into the church, but cemented it, when there, into an unbroken mass. No matter where a man was born, who nursed him, or in what land he was educated: when introduced into the ecclesiastical order, he knew no country or kindred; the church became his world. Success might transplant him to other lands, and bring him to people of other tongues: it mattered not; the language of the church was every where the same, and her interests were his. And all this you will perceive, when commerce held out no alluring hand to the enterprising, its wealth-producing power being comparatively unknown; when learning out of the church was not only profitless, but dangerous; when even the profession of arms had, to a great degree, fallen into disrepute;—at such a time, and under such circumstances, the world seemed to exist only for the church. The little learning that remained was in her monasteries and cloisters; and wealth, rank, and power appeared to be exclusively her patrimony.

But this successful, gorgeous, and mighty fabric, so cleverly organized, and reared to such colossal magnitude, was not the church of Christ. The history of the Papacy is, therefore, not our subject. It may be necessary for us, in passing from century to century, to give a rapid sketch of its progress until the great Reformation regenerated Europe: we have no other interest in its history. But in tracing what I recognise as the church of Christ, I must turn away from this complication of art, and power, and external grandeur, to seek for men who



had personal experience of the religion of Jesus, in its primitive simplicity and saving power.

In making this observation, I must not be supposed to intimate that no personal piety could exist in the Papal communion. No; the remarkable peculiarity of this system is its retention of the truth, and its claim to universality. It did not, as some have since done, deny the atonement, and aggregate together only those who received a tenet which in its nature seems to exclude the salvation of the gospel. On the contrary, Popery, in its worst forms, and in times when it was most rampant, has held the Deity and humanity of Jesus, and the complete efficacy of his atonement. Delusive and destructive as its fearful amount of error has been, I dare not say or think that in all ages many simple-minded Christians may not have received the truth and acted on its principles, and thus have experienced and rejoiced in the salvation of grace.

That a seed of truly pious persons was maintained in the earth, notwithstanding the prevalence of deadly error, can scarcely admit of a doubt. When, however, these were found in the body of the church which was reputed orthodox, they would not be prominent, but exist rather in defiance of prevailing errors and usages, than as the result of suitable spiritual agencies. There is, however, reason for believing that much sterling godliness obtained among many of those bodies which were reputed heretics. The Novatians, a sect which arose in the third century, on account of a dispute, whether those persons who had denied the gospel in times of persecution should be afterwards received back into the church; and the Nestorians, which became a separate body in the fifth century on a nice philological question, as to the proper terms in which to describe the mystery of the Saviour's incarnation,—both of these held all the essential truths of the gospel, and in all probability retained much sterling piety. The remains of the latter body still exist in Assyria.

The farther we advance, however, the more difficult it becomes to seek the probable abode of the meek and pious followers of Christ. In the sixth century the successor and the followers of Augustine in Africa maintained the doctrines of grace; and it may be hoped, in many cases, with fruit unto salvation. In France, also, Lucidus and others strenuously asserted evangelical truth against all opposers. And although Austin brought with him, in his mission to the Saxons of Britain, a great amount of error and superstition, we cannot pursue the



narrative of his labours and ministry without hoping that, by this means, many might have believed to the saving of their souls. The Nestorians continued to preach Christ with zeal and success in the East; as did also the Donatists, who had formed themselves into a separate society in Africa in consequence of an alleged irregular appointment of a bishop in that country, and appear to have possessed much spirituality and piety. We have, in the preserved homilies of the highly-esteemed St. Eloi, bishop of Noyon, a specimen of the teaching and doctrine which the most favoured of the orthodox congregations enjoyed in the seventh century. "He is a good Christian," says this prelate, "who comes often to church, and brings his oblation to be presented on God's altar; who presumes not to taste of the fruits he hath gathered, till he hath first made his offering of them to God; who, on the return of the sacred solemnities, for many days preceding observes a sacred continence, even from his own wife, that he may approach God's altar with a safe conscience; and who can repeat by memory the Creed and the Lord's Prayer."

In the eighth century all satisfactory evidence of the power of spiritual religion had disappeared from the church, and its name and existence were placed in trembling jeopardy. The Saracens had not only spread their religion and government throughout Arabia, Syria, Egypt, and the north of Africa; they had crossed the straits, and subdued Spain; and, not content with this success, invaded France, where they formed an alliance with the powerful duke of Guienne. It is said that on this occasion four hundred thousand Saracen warriors composed the invading army. This was a power greatly beyond that which Charles Martel (who at that time directed the resources of France) could march against them. He, however, succeeded in detaching the disaffected duke from his suicidal alliance, and in a great battle overthrew the Mohammedan host, killing, as it is said, more than three hundred thousand of them in the conflict. Had the result of this battle been different, there was not another nation in Europe which possessed the means of repelling such a host; and, as far as human judgment can decide, the existence of Christianity in the western world depended on the issue of this struggle.

The power and wealth of the clergy continued to increase. The barbarous nations which now occupied many parts of Europe were accustomed in their Heathen state to allow their priesthood very peculiar privileges: they were, consequently,

prepared, on their conversion to Christianity, to award similar dignities and powers to the clergy. Gifts to the church became, indeed, universal, except with the poorest of the people. This was considered the highway to salvation, as propounded throughout Christendom. There was no crime which could not be expiated by clerical and saintly aid; and this was always procurable for a handsome gift.

Still the Nestorians, though they were under Saracenic rule, maintained their zealous efforts to extend Christianity in the East, and seem to have been successful to a considerable extent. During this century Clement, an Irishman, was condemned and imprisoned by Boniface, bishop of Mentz; and as the charges against him include references to his great preference of the scriptures to every other authority, and his earnest appeal to them, it has been supposed that, whatever were his own errors, he was able to rebuke the errors of the times. The fathers of the Albigenses and of the Waldenses, although as yet unknown to history, will hereafter be shown to have maintained, even at this time, the purity of gospel truth.

The ninth century presents the professedly orthodox church still more complete, powerful, and wealthy, and also more earthly-minded, corrupt, and cruel. As the successors of Charlemagne declined in power, the bishops of Rome, by making terms with aspirants for dominion, greatly increased their power by increasing the number of the European states. Now the Romish hierarchy denied, even to councils, the power of determining any matter of doctrine or of discipline: the whole Christian world was subjected to them, as deriving their authority from the pontiffs of Rome only, the successors of Peter, the representatives of Christ. New orders of ecclesiastics were devised, canons and canonesses (the first women convents) were added to the legions of monks who swarmed in every province of the empire. Those errors, also, which had long been germinating in the clerical mind, had now become greatly developed. Transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, and the worship of the host, were maturing into established doctrines. Yet this course of corruption did not continue unchecked. Godeschalcus, a monk of Orbais in France, roused by the prevalence of Pelagianism, began to preach the doctrines of grace with uncommon power and success. At first the clergy of every order heard him with interest and respect, and some bishops and other dignitaries avowed themselves as sharing his sentiments. At length, however, his evangelical

discourses were found not to agree with the teaching of the church, and he was accordingly accused of heresy. But in reasoning he was superior to all his foes. Both from scripture and Augustine he triumphantly defended the doctrines he had taught; but this could not save him. Unable to confute their victim, the heads of the church had power to destroy him. The faithful preacher was degraded from his office, flogged until covered with blood, and then cast into a loathsome dungeon. His teaching had, however, awakened a spirit not easily subdued. The friends of the persecuted preacher united; many bishops, with the archbishop of Lyons at their head, vindicated his character; and fourteen provinces, assembled at Langres, concurred in the same opinion: but by this time Godeschalcus had perished in prison.

Others, also, though with less sacrifice to themselves, promoted the interests of true religion. Claudius, bishop of Turin, whose diocese included Piedmont, by his preaching and writings withstood many of the existing abominations, and effectively disseminated evangelical truth. It is generally supposed that the Waldenses derived great benefit from this prelate. The churches in Bohemia and Moravia, which had been founded by Cyril, still continued independent of Rome; and, if not worshipping God without superstitious observances, at least with more of "spirit and truth" than others. In Britain, also, and especially among the ancient inhabitants of Wales and Cornwall, much piety, learning, and zeal were found at this period. The Nestorians still prosecuted their labours in the East, which were crowned with success.

The tenth century brought no perceptible change in the church, except that spiritual and intellectual darkness became more dense, and ecclesiastical profligacy and immorality more general and daring than ever. It is said that Theophylact, son of the emperor Constantine, the patriarch of the East, who was raised to that dignity at the age of sixteen, delighted in a stud of two thousand horses, which were fed and pampered on the most costly fare; and that on one occasion, being informed, as he was celebrating high mass, that his favourite mare had foaled, he left the church and the sacred service, went and embraced the pet beast and her offspring, and then returned to finish the solemn sacrament. If possible, however, things were in a yet worse state at Rome. According to the confessions of even respectable Roman Catholic writers, "the appearance of the church was much defiled, and its state really deplorable.



The popes were false pontiffs: the abomination of desolation was seen in the temple: Christ was asleep in the ship, and there was no one to awake him: moreover, men, monsters in their kind, of the basest life and debauched manners, intruded themselves into the Roman see, and the depravity extended through every rank; cardinals, bishops, priests, and deacons, followed the evil example of the popes:" while, as even Baronius admits, "vile harlots, the mistresses of the bishops of Rome, domineered in the Papal see." A single instance of this may be given. John X., archbishop of Ravenna, was raised to the Papal throne by the influence of his mother-in-law, Theodora, with whom he continued an incestuous intercourse. He was murdered by Marozia, who shortly after succeeded in placing at the head of the Christian world, under the title of John XI., her own illegitimate son by a preceding pope, Sergius III. And these men were the vicars of Christ, and the channels through which alone his grace could be obtained!

Little can be said respecting the progress of evangelical godliness in this century. The successors of those mentioned in the last century seemed to follow in their footsteps, and many of them undoubtedly experienced the saving grace of Christ.

Yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, the nominal church was greatly enlarged. Rollo, who had led a horde of barbarous Normans into France, and established himself there, was induced by his queen to submit to be baptized, and his warriors followed his example. In Poland, a similar influence introduced Christianity; a daughter of the duke of Bohemia, having been married to the king, induced her husband to adopt her religion; and a host of monkish missionaries soon appeared to spread this faith throughout the country. But, according to the fashion of the times, a shorter course secured this object. The queen prevailed upon her royal consort to issue a command that his subjects should be baptized: to this they gave a reluctant acquiescence, and Poland was henceforth numbered among Christian countries. A third instance of this kind occurred just before the close of the century. Anna, sister of the eastern emperor Basil II., was, A.D. 987, married to Wladimir I., duke of Russia: she also induced her lord to receive her religion. His subjects appear to have followed his example freely, and Russia has to the present day made one of the most powerful Christian nations, after the manner of the Greek church. Hungary, also, which had previously received

some Christian knowledge, was confirmed in the faith by the marriage of Sarolta, who had been baptized at Constantinople, with the king of that country. Norway and Denmark likewise received Christianity in this century; but rather in consequence of the martial prowess of Otho the Great, emperor of Germany, than from teaching or conviction. These national conversions, however unsatisfactory in a religious point of view, had an immense influence on the state of Europe. Prior to this, these northern tribes, unchecked by any principle, pursued a constant course of aggression on the countries of southern Europe, and frequently subdued and occupied important districts. With their nominal conversion to Christianity all this was terminated. We hear no more of the pirates of the north, or of their ravages by sea or by land.

The eleventh century is famous in history for those wars which have obtained the name of "Crusades," and which were waged for the purpose of rescuing the Holy Land from the dominion of the Mohammedans. Peter the Hermit, a tool of pope Urban II., was the first to stir up Europe to this project. He had travelled into Palestine, and had returned, burning with indignation that the places sanctified by the residence, works, and sufferings of Christ, should be trodden down by unbelievers. His eloquence at length roused Europe to send forth her best blood and utmost treasure, to rescue those sacred scenes from the power of the Saracens. There was little or nothing in these enterprises to entitle them to consideration, viewed in a religious aspect. At first, however, the effort was successful: Jerusalem and part of Syria were wrested from Saracenic rule, and erected into a sovereign power as "the kingdom of Jerusalem." The papal dominion remained the same; scandalised by the foulest vices, and frequently brought to the brink of ruin by the ungovernable ambition of her pontiffs. At this season, for some time, we find rival popes resisting and anathematising each other. Yet in all these troubles the pontiffs of Rome laboured to effect a measure which was calculated mightily to consolidate their political influence. They endeavoured to free the monks every where from the jurisdiction of their proper bishops and sovereigns, and to place them under the immediate government of the Roman see; and to a considerable extent this was effected.

The great religious contest of this period respected the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Leutheric, archbishop of Sens, had affirmed that none but the faithful received the body of Christ

in this ordinance. But this was too near an approach to common sense to be tolerated. The king and the archbishop's friends, however, averted the storm of opposition by inducing the prelate to be silent on that subject in future, and to enjoy his bishopric. A nobler spirit despised such timid counsels. Berenger, a man eminent for learning and Christian purity, zealously maintained that no change whatsoever passed on the symbols in the eucharist; that they were merely signs of Christ's absent body. Leo XI. was enraged at this announcement. Meanwhile, the heretic had been made archbishop of Angers. Stimulated and strengthened by numerous disciples, the pious prelate supported his cause against the pope and the king of France; and Leo, seeing the peril of contest, allowed it to sleep. But his successor renewed the persecution; and, having summoned the culprit to Rome, induced him, by terrific threats, to sign a contrary opinion. No sooner, however, was he returned to his own diocese, than he repeated his former sentiments, and declared his humiliation at having been induced by the fear of death to disguise his real sentiments. Hildebrand, who succeeded to the popedom, treated Berenger with kindness on the whole, and did not seem disposed to take up the case; but, besieged with incessant appeals, he at length summoned him to Rome, and induced him to draw up a confession of his faith in respect of this disputed point, very different from that which had been previously extorted from him. This did not satisfy the fanaticism of the orthodox: they still clamoured, another council was held, another confession extorted, still far short of the first; and Berenger was dismissed in safety. But his conscience could not rest: he felt that he had again gone beyond what in calm retirement he thought right, and in consequence he spent the remainder of his life in solitude and prayer. His sentiments, however, lived and germinated in the hearts of many.

The twelfth century brought a renewal of the crusades on a larger scale than even the former; but the struggle was without profit. The best blood and treasure were drained from England, without advantage either to its policy or religion.

To detail the history of the popedom at this period, we should have to write a history of Europe. Its character remained the same: still full of ambition, turbulence, and pride; daring all means, however questionable, to exalt the Roman see. The pope, finding the emperor Henry IV. determined not to make those concessions which he demanded, induced the son to rebel



against the father. This was done; and being *assisted* with all the influence of the papal government, the rebellion succeeded: Henry IV. abdicated, and Henry V. became emperor. But, alas for the hopes of the wicked! Firmly seated on the throne, Henry V. was as intractable as his father. A long and sanguinary contest was the result; after which the cause of the dispute was accommodated, each party making the best bargain in its power.

The religious pride and assumption of the papal see were, however, still more flagrant and astonishing. The expounders of ecclesiastical law at this period speak of the pope, in respect of his attributes, names, omnipotence, infallibility, divine worship, prophetic office, and sacerdotal and regal power, as though he were actually and truly God. Abundant evidence of this has been given by quotations from their writings.

Pope Innocent III., who obtained the papal crown toward the end of this century, prohibited the translation of the scriptures, and the reading of them in any vernacular language; they were consequently by degrees banished from the pulpit, the schools, from religious writings, the laity, and at length from the clergy. It was, indeed, abundantly evident, that the religion of the church was not the religion of the Bible, and that they could not co-exist in continual contact. But when the true light of revelation was shut out, saints, relics, and superstitions abounded. The foolish falsehoods, propagated for this purpose, deserve notice only for their enormity. The seamless coat of Christ was pretended to be found in France, and a portion of *the blood of Christ* to be brought from the East.

The power of granting indulgences to sin was held by the pope alone; but by him it was most liberally dispensed: pardon for sin of any kind or description could be obtained without difficulty for a money payment; whilst purgatory, human satisfaction for sin, the merit of pilgrimages, crusades, monastic life, and the other errors of this system, became yet more general and intense.

The pride and arrogance of the popes, and their haughty demeanour to emperors and kings, in this age, knew no bounds. Passing over numerous other instances, we only mention the conduct of Alexander III. to the emperor Frederic. The latter, having in some measure resisted papal tyranny, was excommunicated; and found the religious fanaticism of his people so great, that he was obliged to submit to the lowest degradation. He was at length received by the pope; when the emperor

prostrating himself on the ground, the haughty pontiff set his foot on the sovereign's neck, pronouncing the words of the Psalmist, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." (Psalm xci. 13.)

Yet, notwithstanding the possession of almost unlimited power, this papal tyranny and corruption was extensively resisted. It is, indeed, a remarkable fact, that, at this period, there was a prevalent expectation of the appearance of Antichrist; whilst many of the learned fully appreciated the character of existing powers in the church, and agreed with Aventine in the assertion, "that all good, open, just, ingenuous, and simple-minded men professed that the empire of Antichrist was begun." The English and German clergy who had married, strongly objected to put away their wives in obedience to papal requirement; the Bohemian clergy refused absolutely to obey the law. The Waldenses greatly increased in number, and continued with ability and effect to expose the tyranny, ignorance, and superstition which reigned at Rome. Their doctrine was essentially the same as that which obtains now in Protestant churches. This at length raised against them such a furious storm of persecution, as cut off great numbers, and ultimately dispersed multitudes to many of the other countries of Europe.

Peter Lombard, and Abelard the lover of Eloisa, were the principal theological writers of this age; who, mingling the most refined subtleties of Aristotle with the strange and contradictory theology of the fathers, and appending to this mixture no small measure of speculation, founded schools of learning which continued for some time. We need not pursue the general history in detail; the mind turns away sickened at the contemplation of the prevalence of pride, vice, and cruelty.

The thirteenth century brought a renewal of the crusades: partial gleams of success occasionally attended the Christian arms, but ultimately all these efforts were fruitless: no permanent Christian authority was established in Palestine.

At the beginning of this century Innocent III. was in the papal chair. He was a very fitting man for this dignity, and fully exhibited the essential principles of the system of which he was the head. Ambitious and tyrannical beyond measure, he lighted up the fires of war in every quarter, placed Sicily, France, Portugal, and Spain, under an interdict, deprived the emperor Philip of his royal dignity, countenanced the usurpation of Otho the Saxon, excommunicated the Venetians, and in

the most imperious manner summoned kings and princes before his tribunal whenever they offended him.

During this century the antichristian heresy of the Romish church was completed. Transubstantiation, a doctrine which teaches that the bread and wine used at the Lord's supper is, after consecration, truly and properly the body and blood, soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ, was established as an essential element of faith in the Romish church. The mass was authoritatively declared to offer unto God a real sacrifice for sin ; and the bread and wine, after consecration, under the title of "the host," or "the victim," was commanded to be worshipped at every celebration of the sacrament. It is scarcely possible to conceive of absurdity, profanity, and idolatry more glaringly displayed than in these tenets and practices. In addition to these, however, the sacramental cup was denied to the laity, and only received by the priests. But that which filled the cup of papal iniquity, was the establishment of the inquisition. The avowed object in the setting up of this horrid tribunal, was to make strict inquiry after suspected persons, for the purpose of subjecting them to imprisonment and severe examination. It was soon carried far beyond these purposes, and made an instrument of murderous torture, which has become infamous throughout Europe. The fable of the immaculate conception, which has recently (December 8th, 1854) been declared to be an article of faith, made considerable progress during this century. Auricular confession was also enforced ; it being made the imperative duty of every individual, of both sexes, to confess all their sins to a priest, at least once a year, and to perform such penances as he might enjoin on pain of punishment. The superstitious services in honour of the Virgin were greatly increased.

Meantime the morals of the clergy were sinking in due proportion to the depreciation of their faith : concubinage, fornication, and even the most unnatural vices, stained their character. Indeed, all the historians of this age describe it as a season of universal corruption.

The great violence and vices of the age increased the number and power of the opponents of this antichristian system. This opposition was, to a great extent, political and carnal. The German emperors struggled repeatedly against Papal arrogance and ambition ; and although frequently foiled, yet they succeeded sometimes in retaliating on those proud pontiffs. The kings of France and England, although occasionally coerced and humbled, more frequently resisted Papal tyranny with



effect, and curbed the power which aspired to unlimited dominion.

Literary efforts of some ability were also made at this time, in opposition to Papal error. Several writers in Germany exposed the usurpation, base designs, and impure practices of Rome with great effect. In England Robert, bishop of Lincoln, Walter Mapes, archdeacon of Oxford, Matthew Paris, and others, did good service to the cause of truth by their opposition to Papal error, and their faithful delineations of ecclesiastical character. In Spain, Arnald of Villanova fearlessly exposed the apostasy and corruption of the clergy, and revealed the hypocrisy of the monastic orders, with great effect. Even Italy produced some witnesses against prevailing corruption.

To those interested in the progress of true religion, the state and persecutions of the Albigenses and Waldenses will be regarded as the important and affecting events of this period. The first of these derived their name from Albiga, or Albi in France; the latter from their founder Peter Waldus, or from a place of a similar name. The religious doctrines held by these two sects were very similar, and almost identical with those held by modern Protestants. They believed the scriptures to be a sufficient rule of faith; and we have a tolerable insight into their character in the judgment of a Papal inquisitor, who had to report on their religious peculiarities. He said, "They reviled the Roman church and the clergy, and condemned the sacraments, the saints, and the approved customs of the church; but they were of a composed and modest demeanour, chaste, frugal, hating pride, lying, swearing, and fraud." Against these pious, unoffending, and numerous communities, fierce and bloody persecuting wars were incessantly waged, until they were either destroyed or scattered over Europe. Of the Albigenses it is said, that between sixty and seventy thousand were massacred, and the others, after a desperate resistance, dispersed. The Waldenses, who had in some measure recovered from the persecutions of the last century, were now subjected to yet more terrible sufferings.

The fourteenth century presented Christianity in the East in a fearful state of humiliation, trembling for existence in the presence of Moslem conquerors. At Rome, under Boniface VIII., Papal pride and power were at their height. The popes of this period, without exception, claimed unlimited power, tyrannized over emperors and kings, and assumed the supreme power in all temporal as well as spiritual affairs. It does not

suit our purpose to detail the deeds of darkness and blood which illustrate this period of Roman rule. It is, however, necessary to state, that, in the latter part of this century, the Italian and French factions in the Sacred College came into open and violent collision. The Italian party elected a pope, who took the name of Urban VI. The French cardinals retired to Aragni, where they also elected a pope, who took the name of Clement VII. These rival pontiffs hurled fearful anathemas at each other ; while the Catholic world was divided : Italy, Germany, England, and some other countries, obeyed Urban ; and Naples, France, and Spain followed Clement. The distraction of the church seemed complete. Bloody wars were excited : these popes died, but others were elected to fill their places ; so that this schism was continued for more than fifty years. The true character of the Papacy remained unaltered. Its blasphemous assumption of Divine attributes, its arrogant demand of all temporal power, its monstrous claim to present to every benefice in the world, its doctrinal error, idolatry, and wickedness remained as before.

We are now brought to the dawn of a brighter day. The foolish schism already noticed greatly diminished the Papal power ; and many within the pale of the church, who were sensible of existing abominations, now ventured to bear a testimony against them. Philip of France is said to have publicly burnt a bull of Boniface VIII. The German electors, in the time of the emperor Louis of Bavaria, published a spirited protest against the assumptions of the pope in the empire. Edward III. of England united with Louis of Bavaria to resist the Papal claims. Charles V. of France displayed similar spirit, asserted his royal rights, ordered a book to be written against Papal tyranny and rapacity, and commanded the scriptures to be translated into French. Charles VI. followed in the same steps, and displayed equal spirit. Our Richard II., with John of Arragon, and several other sovereigns, united to curb the power of the popes. Many eminent Papal writers also strongly exposed the simony, corruptions, innovations, and vices of the popes, the libertinism of the monks, and the ignorance and indolence of the clergy ; while the university of Paris publicly refuted and condemned the doctrines of John XXII. concerning the state of souls after death : so that on every side evidence sprang forth, bearing testimony to the intolerable character of the Papacy.

In these circumstances we look with great interest to the direct efforts which were then made to reform these fearful

evils, and especially to those made in our own country. The doctrines of the Waldenses, by means of their dispersion, were disseminated very widely during this century; and vast numbers in France, the Netherlands, England, Germany, and other countries, heartily embraced them. John Wickliff, rector of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, was the morning-star of the Reformation in this country. Nor did his labours terminate in their effects on Britain. This man, great as a scholar, an orator, and divine, is said by his own unaided powers to have translated the scriptures from the Latin Vulgate into the English tongue. Not content with this great work, he proceeded, by direct appeals to the word of God, to disprove the errors and to condemn the vices of Popery, and continued until he had demonstrated the Papacy to be antichristian. He then brought forth, from the fountain of light and truth, the genuine doctrines of the gospel, and preached salvation through the merits and sacrifice of Christ alone. Multitudes believed: the truth mightily prevailed on every side. Persecution arose; but the reformer had friends: John of Gaunt, the noble-minded duke of Lancaster, and Edward III., favoured him; so that, although often placed in great peril, he died in peace. Bohemia was also the scene of similar meliorating influences. The doctrines of the Waldenses had become known in that country, and the labours of Wickliff had also reached it, and produced considerable effect. At length John Huss, with Mal-  
læsius, a canon of Prague, and Jerome of the same city, became mighty witnesses for the truth.

It must also be mentioned as one of the most hopeful signs of the times, that a great revival of learning began about this period, which every where promoted the cause of truth, and helped forward this Reformation.

The commencement of the fifteenth century presented the religious condition of Europe in a most interesting and exciting aspect. Light and darkness had been brought into intense collision, and the destiny of the world for ages seemed suspended on the result.

It need scarcely be said, that the Papacy retained all the errors, vices, and antichristian pretensions which had marked its career in preceding ages. The personal character of the popes of this period was as dark as in the earlier times. I will mention but two. Shortly after the schism between the conflicting popes had been healed, Eneas Sylvius was raised to the Papal throne. He had been previously regarded as an able



and upright man, had written a history of the council of Basil with much accuracy and fidelity, and had in various works borne a clear and strong testimony against the errors and evils of Rome. He was, however, no sooner invested with power, than he published a bull, in which he retracted and condemned all his preceding works and actions. He then entered fully into the spirit of the system of which he was the head, and soon after published another bull, prohibiting all appeal from the judgment of the pope to any council. Sixtus IV. and Innocent VIII. followed; and then came Alexander VI., a man whose character for every vice and violence has scarcely been surpassed in the history of the world. One of his vices led to the proverb that he filled Spain with harlots, and Rome with his offspring. He is said to have died by accidentally drinking some poison, which he had prepared, in conjunction with his son, for the murder of nine newly-made cardinals.

Having attained this height of iniquity, the Papal see determined to maintain its power by violence. Early in this century John Huss, the Bohemian reformer, was burned alive by order of the council of Constance. Jerome of Prague shared the same fate in the following year. In England, a similar spirit was displayed; the bones of Wickliff were taken up and burned, and many of his followers and of the Lollards were cut off. In short, it became the rule to destroy all who resisted the power of the priesthood.

Meanwhile, the most reckless course was pursued at Rome. Impious assumption was carried so far, that eminent men declared "that the pope made himself more than God." Church preferments were sold by public auction, and pardon dispensed for the most enormous iniquities at a regular money price. What, indeed, must have been the character of a professedly religious government which would deliberately, and beforehand, sell a dispensation, exempting the holder from all punishment in this world and the next, although he committed incest, sodomy, and other nameless and detestable sins?

In this century a new agent was brought into operation, which mightily contributed to the advancement of civilization, learning, and the diffusion of scriptural truth. Printing was invented, and the art brought into use, about A.D. 1450. The vast importance of this means of multiplying books, without the tedious and laborious process of copying with the pen, was quickly appreciated; and the new art was eagerly acquired and brought into practice by every nation of Europe. It was soon found, that the rapid circulation of knowledge and general

intelligence, thus introduced, was incompatible with the ignorance, delusion, and priestcraft which had for ages, as a mighty *incubus*, crushed down the spirit and moral enterprise of mankind; and its immediate effects were highly beneficial in preparing the way for the great result which transpired in the following century, and with a glance at which we must close this address.

The sixteenth century opened on a reigning church in a state of universal corruption; whilst Europe, which had been for some time progressing in civilization and learning, was every where preparing to rise in rebellion against a tyranny so unnatural and enormous, and thereby to secure mental, moral, and religious freedom.

It was, indeed, felt, even in the church, that a reformation was necessary: the subject was repeatedly discussed, and many popes professed to enter on the work. Adrian VI., engaged on this subject, wrote thus to the emperor:—"We know that there have been in this holy see, for many years, many abominations; nor is it surprising if the disease should descend from the head to the members, from the pontiff to the inferior prelates." Yet, notwithstanding such confessions, nothing effectual was done.

The most efficient and direct cause of the Reformation was the hawking of indulgences to commit sin, at a given price, throughout Germany. This roused Luther, a professor of divinity at Wirtemberg, who entered into conflict with papal abominations, and ceased not until Germany was wrested from the dark power of Rome, and placed in the light of scriptural truth and a preached gospel.

Ulric Zuinglius pursued a similar course in Switzerland, and with the like success.

In our own country a deliverance equally glorious was effected. Henry VIII., whose talents and energy had raised England to a position of great prominence among European states, although he had previously written against Luther on behalf of the church, and earned the title of "Defender of the Faith," at length threw off the power of the pope, and separated England from the see of Rome. This course, which, in itself, was merely political, was only rendered possible by the prevalence, in the public mind of the English, of those doctrines which Wickliff had so widely disseminated. During the reign of Edward VI., Protestantism was formally established, and considerable progress was made in the communication of scrip-

tural truth. This reign was, however, of short duration. Edward died in 1553, leaving the crown to Mary, who immediately restored Popery and its terrors. This queen reigned five years, during which persecution continually prevailed. The noblest blood of England was shed at the stake; and all that cruelty and power could do to put down the truth, and rear up the papal power, was done. Mary died, and Elizabeth ascended the throne, in 1558, and reigned throughout the remainder of the century. During this period the Protestant faith was fully established as the religion of Britain; and the way prepared for that mighty expansion of evangelical truth, that glorious developement of religious action and effort, which it is our privilege to witness.



## LECTURE XII.

### WORDS, AND THE WAY TO USE THEM; OR, THE NATURE, IMPORTANCE, AND PROPER USE OF LANGUAGE.

**MARVELLOUS** Nature and Powers of Words—Origin of Language, by Divine Teaching—Words the great Means by which Knowledge is obtained and communicated—Four Things necessary to be known respecting Words—Importance of this Knowledge—The Spelling, Meaning, and Derivation of Words—Instances—Different Sorts of Words—**NAMES** or **NOUNS**, their Number, Gender, and Case—**ARTICLES**, Indefinite, and Definite: their Use—**PRONOUNS**, their different Kinds; Subject to Person, Number, Gender, and Case—**ADJECTIVES**, their Degrees of Comparison—**VERBS**, their Person; the proper Use of Verbs in the second Person singular—Number, Tense, and Mood—**PARTICIPLES**; Regular and Irregular Verbs—**ADVERBS**, their Nature and Use: five Kinds of Adverbs; Comparison of Adverbs—**PREPOSITIONS**, their Nature and Use—**CONJUNCTIONS**, their different Kinds—The Rules and Regulations under which Words are grouped together to form Sentences—Sentences, simple and compound—Points or Stops—Those Rules applied to Nouns, Articles, Pronouns, Adjectives, and Verbs—Concord and Government—Other Rules for the Construction of Sentences—**THE PRONUNCIATION** of Words and Sentences—The Pronunciation of single Words—Accent and Quantity—Pronunciation in Respect of Sentences—Emphasis, its Importance and Influence—**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**, of two Kinds—**OF THE IMAGINATION**: Metaphor, Allegory, Comparison, Personification, Antithesis, Vision, and Climax—**OF THE PASSIONS**: Hyperbole, Apostrophe, Exclamation, and Interrogation—Hints for the proper Use of Figures in Speech—Importance of these Studies—Illustrations—Their perfect Agreement with religious Purpose and Divine Influence—These Efforts should go beyond mere Accuracy of Language—Words should be carefully selected to insure Clearness of Expression—Should be suitable to the Subject—And adapted to convey our Meaning with Energy and Force—Extract from David Stoner—Conclusion.

**ACTING** on the unquestionable principle,—that a person cannot teach what he does not know,—we have hitherto directed our efforts to place before the mind those important elements of knowledge which every local preacher should possess: namely, the true character of the Bible, with an analysis of its contents; the leading doctrines which it propounds; an account of the Old-Testament church; and of the church of Christ, from its origin to the time of the Reformation. Having passed through this course of study, and earnestly urged you to become fully acquainted with its several parts, it

now becomes necessary to offer some suggestions for the purpose of assisting a young man, not favoured with many educational advantages, who may be called to this course of duty, to apply this knowledge with the greatest effect to the proclamation of Divine truth for the salvation of mankind.

In entering upon this task, we have to direct particular attention to the agents or instruments by which all this knowledge is attained, and through which alone it can be communicated; namely, **WORDS**. If you look at any page of a book, and, selecting one word from the many with which it is covered, subject it to particular and careful examination, you will find it composed of several characters called *letters*; to which you have been from your childhood taught to attach certain definite sounds, so that to the combination of them found in this word you can, by the power of speech, give utterance to, or, as we express it, *speak*, the word; that is, so communicate the sound of the word, by your own voice, to the ear of any other person, as to give him, if conversant with our language, precisely the same idea of the identical meaning conveyed by that sound, as if he had seen the word on the page himself. Now, there does not seem to be any thing very remarkable or peculiar in this word. Suppose it be the term *man*. You look at it; and the separate letters of which it consists seem to display no intrinsic idea. For any thing we can tell to the contrary, it might serve as well for the name of a quadruped or a bird, as for the designation of an individual of the human family. It does not, in regard of its elements and formation, appear to possess any intellectual character whatever. The same remark applies to all other words. Yet we have no hesitation in asserting, that these combinations which we call *words* are the most wonderful things ever submitted to the consideration of mankind.

Words are the media by which thought is made visible to the eye, audible to the ear, and intelligible to the mind. They are, in fact, the palpable and apprehensible forms of ideas. You feel in your mind a deep and powerful emotion: it is breathed forth in silent aspiration, and passes away to be known no more. Yet let this emotion be recorded in written words, and a person acquainted with the same language, although removed, by half the earth's circumference or by ages of time, from the individual whose mind was the originator of these thoughts, will by means of words realise, on seeing the record, the exact emotion, gauge the extent of feeling, and know precisely how the spirit was affected. But, what is a

still more remarkable circumstance, these words not only communicate description, they have also a powerful tendency to produce in our mind precisely similar feelings to those which existed in the mind of the person whose condition such words represent.

We say, we know nothing more wonderful than this. It is indeed marvellous, that, taking a single word, and writing it down in letters of such a size as to be seen by thousands of people assembled in one place, or by simply enunciating it with the voice, every one in the large multitude will thereby have precisely the same idea brought before his mind ! How strange, that, by the exhibition of a written word to a large company, we can charge the rays of light with thought, can burden them with sense, so that they shall, like the electric telegraph, faithfully transmit the same idea to every individual mind there present ! Equally strange it is, that, by enunciating the word, precisely the same thing is done, although by different means : in this instance, the vibrations of the air perform the same functions as the rays of light did in the former case, and convey to the mind of every hearer the same information. But if this is a mysterious process when regarded in relation to one word, what is it when considered in respect of an address or discourse ? Here the reader or speaker not only enunciates facts, and argues from them as premisses, in favour of certain conclusions, which he wishes his hearers to adopt,—and which he enforces with all the energy of his own mind, by reason, persuasion, and entreaty ; displaying in support of this effort, his love, pity, and most earnest desire ; and thus communicates his knowledge, opinions, and desires to his hearers ;—but he is also able, by the various intonations of his voice and his manner of utterance, faithfully to communicate to the listening mind all the emotion, feeling, and pathos with which his own mind has been affected. Well might the poet, when considering the mystery of words, exclaim :—

“Those wondrous symbols that can still retain  
The phantom forms that pass along the brain,  
O'er unsubstantial thought hold strong control,  
And fix the essence of the' immortal soul.”

Perhaps no subject has been so largely and so unsatisfactorily discussed, as the origin of language and of writing. Writers on this subject seem intensely bent on displaying their learning and philosophy, by arguing in favour of the human invention and progressive developement of these arts. It is not too



much to say here, that these attempts would never have been carried to such an extent as we witness, but from the natural antipathy of the human mind to admit the interposition of Divine influence and instruction. In respect of language, our great lexicographer has settled the question in few words. "Language must have come by INSPIRATION; a thousand, nay, a million of children could not invent a language; while the organs are pliable, there is not understanding enough to form a language; and by the time that there is understanding enough, the organs are grown stiff. We know that after *a certain age*, we cannot learn a language." This conclusion harmonizes with the teaching of the Bible. Adam is not described as labouring through a life-time to invent and arrange words, investing them with meaning and settling the order of their relation and connexion. On the contrary, we are taught, that, just after his creation, indeed before he had any partner or companion, when, as our philosophers would say, he had no need of language, he gave names to all living creatures, which names are known to have been significant of their nature and dispositions. More than this, soon afterward, on receiving his wife, he gave utterance to the remarkable exposition of natural law, which we have in the close of the second chapter of Genesis. We have no more doubt that the first man was divinely taught writing, than that he thus acquired a knowledge of language. For it seems impossible to account for the preservation of so many names and numbers throughout successive centuries, without the aid of such means of recording these facts from the beginning.

However this may be, words were unquestionably of Divine origin. The first words which are recorded as being uttered, were spoken by God himself. It is worthy of remark, that they strikingly exhibit the vocation and tendency of language:—"Let there be light," said the Divine architect of the universe; "and there was light." And as this mandate exhibited our system in all its harmony, symmetry, and beauty, so the agency of words has enlightened the human family throughout all the world's history. As words are the vehicles of thought, they have, in all times and under all circumstances, been the grand means of instruction. It is, my brethren, with these very common and familiar, but truly grand and mysterious, agents, that we have to do. Do we need information on the most simple and ordinary subjects? we must seek it in words. Are we led to ponder the most profound sublimities of revealed truth? this also must be done by the study of words. Here, indeed, the

Holy Spirit's blessed illumination must not be overlooked. But the fullest recognition of this does not in any degree qualify our statement ; for this illumination is cast on the word of God. We do not see spiritual things through another medium ; but, by the light of the Spirit of God, we perceive the beauties and blessings in the written word to be deeper and more numerous than we could otherwise have possibly discovered. Yes ; and if we want to disseminate the gospel, and to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ, it must be done not by superstitious actions and unmeaning genuflexions, not by rites and ceremonies, but by sanctified conversation, and the proclamation of a preached gospel ; in fact, by the use of words.

In these circumstances, is it not wonderful that we have not paid more attention to such an important class of instruments ? Men have argued about doctrines, have differed in opinion as to relations of matters of fact, have entertained conflicting judgments as to other subjects of importance ; and yet it will frequently be found, that, whilst intense and anxious care has been given to the matters in debate, little attention has been paid to the terms in which those subjects are discussed ; and this neglect is in many instances the principal, if not the only, reason for the difference of opinion which has occasioned prolonged debate and needless dispute.

If, then, anxious to understand the nature and use of words, we direct our careful attention to the subject, we shall find that there are four things relating to them which we ought clearly to know, and fully to comprehend :—

1. We look at any word, and find it composed of certain characters called *letters*, and that it is intended to represent a certain sense : the spelling and meaning of words are therefore the first things to be considered.

2. A cursory glance at the subject will show, that there are not only different words, but different *sorts* of words. A careful inquiry into the nature and cause of this variety, and of the laws which regulate and govern each of the several sorts of words, should next engage attention.

3. Words are seldom used singly, but generally grouped together into sentences. And this grouping can only be done under certain laws and regulations. We should therefore learn fully to understand those rules, and habitually to conform to them all that we write or speak.

4. We find that words are not only intended for the eye, but also and principally for the ear. We have therefore to acquire the practice of giving to each word its exact vocal utterance or

pronunciation; and this, whether it stands alone or is arranged as part of a sentence.

I am well aware, that, in urging the necessity of this knowledge, I have to contend with many inveterate prejudices. Persons who publicly take upon themselves the office of teachers, sometimes speak of grammars and dictionaries in a slighting, if not in a contemptuous, manner. But what, I may ask, would be thought of a person claiming to be a mason or a carpenter, who repudiated the use of those tools necessary for the performance of these handicraft arts? Yet to a teacher words are of far greater importance than tools to an artisan. Allow me then to say, at once, you cannot learn or teach, with any confidence of accurate conception in yourself, or of conveying your meaning with correctness to others, without this knowledge. The words you read have been arranged under the guidance of certain rules; without some knowledge of these rules you cannot be certain that you attach to these words the meaning which the writer intended to express. Nor can you, without this knowledge, ever be certain that you say what you mean to say. For many persons, either not knowing or neglecting the laws of language, have often spoken and written the very opposite of what they intended. A person is regarded as infringing the ordinary courtesies of life, if he does not give to a person with whom he has frequent intercourse his proper name; and why, by the same rule, should he not call a word by its proper name? The latter fault is much more likely to lead to error and confusion than the former.

This very necessary and highly important branch of knowledge has been rendered very unpopular and forbidding by the abstruse and incongruous manner in which it has been propounded to those whom it was intended to benefit. Give your kind attention while I endeavour, without making any pretensions as a teacher of grammar, to afford you a few useful hints on each of the four branches of this important subject.

1. First, then, as to the spelling and meaning of words.

A word may be regarded as having a body and a soul. Its body, or external form, is composed of certain letters placed in a given order in connexion with each other. This is its visible, tangible, unchangeable form or body. For, although it may be written in different hands or printed in various types, it is essentially the same identical thing. No letter can be omitted, no other can be added, no alteration in the order of the letters can be allowed: its true and proper identity must under all



circumstances be preserved. This we call the body of the word.

Now, besides this, there pertains to every word a kind of spiritual or intellectual essence, which we call its meaning or sense. This, although not visible to the eye, nor audible to the ear, is nevertheless the great object for which the body of the word was formed. This soul or sense of the word is not, like its body, made up of component letters which are fixed and unchangeable. Sometimes its range is vast in extent and power, so exceedingly comprehensive, that the use of other words is not unfrequently required to limit and fix the sense in which an important one is to be understood. The thought, idea, or meaning with which the word is charged, is, of course, its principal quality, and should be most carefully studied.

There is a third thing pertaining to words which should be mentioned here; and that is their formation and derivation. Words will be found to be composed of one or more syllables; that is, of one or more such combinations of letters as can be pronounced in one single sound. If, for instance, we have to speak the word *good*, it is done in one simple vocal utterance. But when we have to utter *goodness*, it is not so: here must be employed two such efforts of the voice. It must not, therefore, be supposed, that the division of words into one, two, three, or more syllables, is a mere arbitrary arrangement, which may be lightly esteemed or neglected. It is, on the contrary, a natural and important result of the combination of letters which should receive careful attention. Notice should also be taken of the manner in which one word grows out of another, or two or three are compounded together so as to make one; for instance, from *create* comes *created*, *creation*, and *creator*. And by addition *bishop* becomes *archbishop*, and *house*, *household*, and *householder*.

The necessary knowledge of this kind cannot, however, be communicated in a lecture, nor, indeed, in a grammatical treatise. For information respecting the correct spelling and the true signification of words, recourse must be had to a good dictionary. And this should be perseveringly consulted, till, in all cases of uncertainty, the mind is informed and the judgment fully matured respecting the words in our mother tongue, so that we have a perfect knowledge of their forms and a tolerably extensive acquaintance with their sense and meaning. I content myself with saying "a tolerably extensive acquaintance with these powers of words," because in the case of persons

of ordinary means and limited time, the attainment of perfect knowledge is out of the question.

As a means of indicating the importance and extent of this acquirement, I will, before passing from this part of the subject, give two examples,—the first relating to the different significations represented by the same word; the second showing the family relationship of words, and the minute differences of meaning by which they are distinguished.

The first is quoted from Dr. Johnson's quarto dictionary under the word *bitterness*, which is said to mean,—

- "1. A bitter taste.
- "2. Malice, grudge, hatred, implacability.
- "3. Sharpness, severity of temper.
- "4. Satire, piquancy, keenness of reproach.
- "5. Sorrow, vexation, affliction."

And the word is shown, by quotations from our best authors, to have been used by them in all these senses. Nor is this by any means a remarkable case; for some words are found to possess twenty such inflexions of meaning.

The other instance respects the meaning of the kindred words, *happiness*, *felicity*, *bliss*, *blessedness*, *beatitude*; and is copied from CRABB'S "English Synonymes." The learned author first regards these terms in respect of their origin. "*Happiness* signifies the state of being happy; *felicity*, in Latin *felicitas*, from *felix*, 'happy,' most probably comes from the Greek word signifying youth, which is the age of purest enjoyment; *bliss*, or *blessedness*, signifies the state or property of being *blessed*; *beatitude*, from the Latin *beatus*, signifies the property of being happy in a superior degree."

These words are then considered in respect of their peculiar shades of meaning. "Happiness comprehends that aggregate of pleasurable sensations, which we derive from external objects; it is the ordinary term which is employed alike in the colloquial or the philosophical style: *felicity*, is a higher expression that comprehends inward enjoyment, or an aggregate of inward pleasure, without regard to the source from whence they are derived: *bliss* is a still higher term, expressing more than either *happiness* or *felicity*, both as to the degree and nature of the enjoyment. Happiness is the thing adapted to our present condition, and to the nature of our being as a compound of body and soul; it is impure in its nature, and variable in its degree; it is sought for by various means and with great eagerness, but it often lies much more within our reach than we are apt to imagine. Happiness admits of degrees,

since every individual is placed in different circumstances, either of body or mind, which fit him to be more or less happy. *Felicity* is not regarded in the same light ; it is that which is positive and independent of all circumstances : domestic *felicity*, and conjugal *felicity*, are regarded as moral enjoyments, abstracted from every thing which can serve as an alloy : ‘ No greater felicity can genius attain than that of having purified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiousness.’\* *Bliss* is that which is purely spiritual ; it has its source in the imagination, and rises above the ordinary level of human enjoyments. *Blessedness* is a term of spiritual import, which refers to the happy condition of those who enjoy the Divine favour, and are permitted to have a foretaste of heavenly bliss, by the exaltation of their minds above earthly *happiness*. *Beatitude* denotes that quality or degree of *happiness* only, which is most exalted ; namely, heavenly happiness.”

These instances will be sufficient to show, that words present to the mind a highly important and interesting subject for intellectual research. Within this brief compass, we have a glimpse of that which I have called “ the soul of a word,” with its vast and comprehensive range, subject nevertheless to extensive and accurate classification. Here also we see how the family relationship of words affects their meaning, and how with curious exactness each word represents a distinct and precise sense : so that words which are commonly regarded as synonymous, and which, as such, we frequently use interchangeably, are, on careful examination, found each to be properly the vehicle of a separate and distinct thought. It will be seen at once that the knowledge of this quality gives to language a precision, elegance, and power, which must always be unknown to superficial observers. I advise you, then, my brethren, and especially my younger brethren, to cultivate a closer acquaintance with the formation of words, and with their various meanings.

2. We pass on to the second branch of our inquiry. A very slight examination is sufficient to convince us, that words are of different sorts. You take, for instance, some words, *table*, *house*, *man*, *walking*, *flying*, and *fighting*, and each separate term conveys to you a distinct subject or idea : it has a meaning of its own, while many other words, such as *therefore*, *became*, *hence*, *what*, *why*, &c., of themselves, convey no sense, and can only do so when employed in connexion with other words. If

\* JOHNSON.



we look more closely into those words given in the first instance, we find an essential difference between them, which clearly divides them into two classes. *Table*, *house*, and *man* are names. They represent certain things to the mind. *Walking*, *flying*, and *fighting*, convey to the mind ideas of certain actions ; so that, whilst the last three are of a kind similar to each other, they are dissimilar to the three names, and cannot be subjected to the same mode of treatment. In order, therefore, to know how to use words, we must endeavour to ascertain how many sorts of them there are, and the peculiar treatment or rules which are adapted to each sort.

The first sort of words to which I will call your attention, is that which is composed of names. These are by grammarians called *Nouns*,—an old French word which simply signifies *name*. This class of words therefore comprehends all names. It is important that you have a definite notion of the proper meaning to be attached to this word. They are not merely the names of persons which are nouns, nor even the names of all things ; but they also comprehend the terms which stand for every thing that has existence. You will find from this definition, that the science of words, instead of being made up of many dry, formal, abstruse rules, as Grammar is usually regarded, is a subject for rational thought, and for the exercise of sober judgment. For instance : the words, *man*, *John*, *horse*, *dog*, and *cat*, are nouns : so are the words, *house*, *table*, and *chair* ; for they are the names of persons, animals, and things. But the words, *thought*, *pride*, *folly*, *opinion*, and *sentiment* are also nouns ; for although the meaning which they represent is imperceptible by the bodily senses, and unsubstantial, and cannot be called “things,” yet they have an existence, and exercise an influence.

Nouns are generally said to be affected by number, gender, and case.

By *number* we mean that a noun speaks of one, or of more than one ; or what is familiarly said to be *singular* or *plural*. Speaking of one pen, we say *pen* ; of more than one, *pens*, so that the noun becomes changed in form on this account. This is generally done by adding *s* to the singular noun. But this rule is not universal : *man* becomes *men* in the plural ; *box*, *boxes* ; *calf*, *calves*, and so on.

*Gender* marks the distinction of the sexes in nouns ; and, strictly speaking, all English nouns are supposed to be of some gender. The males are defined as *masculine*, females as *feminine*, and inanimate things as *neuter*. But no change is com-

monly made in nouns by this circumstance, inasmuch as the word is seldom subjected to any alteration ; the masculine and feminine nouns being generally words essentially different.

By *case*, we understand the circumstances or condition in which the noun stands. The cases in our language are three : thus, "George walks to church ; John rides to town." Here *George* and *John* are said to be in the nominative case ; that is, they are simply named as performing an action. The second or possessive case is, when a noun is placed in such a connexion as implies the possession of something ; as, "The estate of my father," or, "My father's estate." Here *father* is said to be in the possessive case, the possession of an estate being ascribed to him. This may be done by using the word *of*, or by adding an apostrophe with an *s* after it, as in the second example. This is the only instance in which case affects the form of the noun. The third is called the objective case. Thus, "Charles teaches Henry." Here *Henry* is the object of an action performed by another, and consequently is in the objective case. The following simple rule will be sufficient to enable any person to fix with certainty the case of every noun. If any person or thing be represented as *performing an action*, that person or thing is a noun in the nominative case. If any person or thing be represented as *possessing something*, that person or thing is a noun in the possessive case : and if any person or thing be represented as *neither performing nor possessing*, it is a noun in the objective case.

A sort of words may next be mentioned, which, although very few in number, perform important services in our language. These are called *articles* ; and are of two kinds, the indefinite article *a*, or *an* ; and the definite article *the*. The use of the article is to limit or extend the signification of nouns. Thus, if you are speaking generally, you would say *a man, a house, a garden, an index*. You would thus mean any one man, house, garden, or index. The general rule for the use of this article is that *a* is used before all nouns, except those which begin with a vowel, or a silent *h*, which nouns have *an* instead. The definite article is used to fix attention on any one particular object : hence we say *the man, the house, &c.* ; meaning that one man of whom we had been speaking, or that particular house to which reference had been made.

You will see, from this specimen, what is meant by these different sorts of words, or, as grammarians call them, *parts of speech* :—as the distinctions between nouns as names, and

articles as intended to limit or extend their signification, will be apparent to all who will devote their attention to the subject.

We now introduce to your notice another kind of words, which have received the name of *pronouns*. This name literally signifies *for nouns*, and is given to words of this description, because they are used to avoid unpleasant repetitions, and are generally employed instead of nouns. The following sentence is given to show the use of pronouns, which are distinguished by being printed in italics: "A woman went to a man, and told *him* that *he* was in great danger of being murdered by a gang of robbers, *who* had made preparations for attacking *him*. *He* thanked *her* for *her* kindness; and, as *he* was unable to defend *himself*, *he* left *his* house, and went to a neighbour's." Now if there had been no pronouns, these sentences must have been written thus:—"A woman went to a man, and told *the man*, that *the man* was in great danger of being murdered by a gang of robbers; as *a gang of robbers* had made preparations for attacking *the man*. *The man* thanked *the woman* for *the woman's* kindness: and, as *the man* was unable to defend *the man's self*, *the man* left *the man's house* and went to a neighbour's." A comparison of these two statements will show the nature and importance of pronouns in the accurate and elegant construction of sentences.

There is scarcely any part of our language in which errors and inaccuracies are more frequently perpetrated, than in the department of pronouns; and you will find it necessary to attend closely to the subject, in order fully to understand the proper manner of using these words. There are four kinds of pronouns, and each kind is subject to distinct and peculiar laws. They are *personal*, *relative*, *demonstrative*, and *indefinite*.

(1.) In respect of *personal* pronouns there are four things to be considered: the person, the number, the gender, and the case.

You have been told that pronouns stand instead of nouns. Now the pronoun which stands in the place of the person who speaks is called the *first person*. That which stands in the place of the person who is spoken to, is called the *second person*. And that which stands in the place of the person spoken of, is said to be the *third person*. So that in the sentence, "*I* am asking *you* about *him*," you have the three persons clearly shown.

The *number* of pronouns must be next considered. As they stand instead of nouns, they must of necessity follow the



division of nouns into singular and plural ; and this is done by varying the spelling of the pronoun to meet the number of the noun which it represents. The following table fully shows the numbers of the personal pronouns :—

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I	We
Second Person	Thou	You
Third Person	He	They

We have now to notice the *gender* of pronouns. And the only change which this effects on the personal pronouns is in the third person singular, which is *he* in the masculine, *she* in the feminine, and *it* in the neuter, gender.

*Case* must now be considered. And this, which we said made scarcely any alteration on nouns, effects most important alterations in their pronoun substitutes. The following table fully exhibits these changes :—

	Singular.			Plural.		
	Nom.	Poss.	Objec.	Nom.	Poss.	Objec.
First Person	I	{ My Mine }	{ Me	We	{ Our Ours }	{ Us
Second Person	Thou	{ Thy Thine }	{ Thee	You	{ You Yours }	{ You
Third Per.	Mas. He	His	Him	They	Their	
	Fem. She	{ Her Hers }	{ Her	They	Their	Them.
	Neu. It	Its	It	They	Their	

It is necessary to explain the reason why two words are set down under the possessive case, against *I*, *thou*, *she*, *we*, *you*, and *they*. The first of these words is to be used when the pronoun stands before the name of the person or thing possessed ; the second, when the pronoun follows such name. Thus, "This is *my* knife." "This knife is *mine*." "That is *thy* house." "That house is *thine*." "This is *our* book." "This book is *ours*," &c.

(2.) We will now speak of *relative* pronouns. Of these there are only three, *who*, *which*, and *that*. The two latter always remain the same through all numbers, genders, and cases. But the pronoun *who* becomes *whose* in the possessive case, and *whom* in the objective. It should also be observed, that these words, *who*, *whose*, *whom*, can only be correctly used when representing men, women, or children. It is not proper to say, "The dog *who* bit his master ;" nor, "The cow *who* came into the house." But the relative *that* may be used indifferently ; as, "The boy *that* ran." "The horse *that* fell."

These are called *relative* pronouns because they always *relate* directly to some noun, pronoun, or combination of words, which has been previously mentioned, and which is therefore called the *antecedent*. As this antecedent may be separated by many words from the pronoun, the writer or speaker is in great danger of mistaking it, and using an improper pronoun. Errors of this kind are found in the works of our best authors.

(3.) The *demonstrative* pronouns are, *this, these, that, those, and what*. These are called demonstrative, because they particularly point out, or demonstrate, the nouns before which they are placed, or for which they stand. They admit of no inflection except the change from singular to plural. *That* makes *those* in the plural; *this* makes *these*, and *what* does not change.

*What, who, whose, whom, and which*, being employed in asking questions, are sometimes called interrogative pronouns: but the only observation necessary respecting them is this,—that *which*, when used interrogatively, may be applied to human beings, as well as to inanimate things, although when otherwise employed it cannot with propriety be so applied. Thus it is proper to say, "*Which* man was it who spoke?" although it is improper to say, "The man *which* spoke."

(4.) *Indefinite* pronouns, unlike the *demonstrative*, express their subjects in a general manner. *Some, one, such, other, any, none, another, all, &c.*, are of this class. They have no variation of case, with the exception of *one* and *other*, both of which have a possessive case. *One*, though singular in its general signification, is sometimes used in the plural number; as, "Look at the great *ones* of the world:" "My little *ones* are happy." The following examples will show the use of this kind of pronouns: "*Some* of them were good and diligent, *others* were lazy and vicious." "*One* ought to know *one's* own mind." *None* is used in both numbers; as, "*None* is so deaf as he that will not hear." "*None* of those are equal to these."

A fourth sort of words is called *adjectives*. This name literally signifies *something added to something else*. This class of words is, in the Anglo-Saxon tongue, called *noun's companion*. The true idea of the use of adjectives may be easily apprehended. These words are used to describe the nature or properties of nouns. They are indeed words added to nouns, to point out with precision the qualities or properties of the things which they represent. You may, for instance, be speaking of a

house; and, in order to point it out exactly, you say, "The *large white house*." Here *large* and *white*, describing a property or quality of the house, are adjectives. "The *long green field*." "The *tall rich man*." "A *fair woman*." "A *white mouse*," &c. Here *long*, *green*, *tall*, *rich*, *fair*, and *white* are also adjectives. These words have no gender or case; but they have what are called *degrees of comparison*, because they describe the measure or degree of the quality or property mentioned. These degrees are called *positive*, *comparative*, and *superlative*. The regular mode of expressing these inflexions of meaning, is by adding *er* to the adjective in the positive degree in order to form the comparative, and *est* to form the superlative; thus,—

Positive.	Comparative.	Superlative.
Fair,	fairer,	fairest.
Long,	longer,	longest.
Wise,	wiser,	wisest.

It will be observed, that in the instance last given only *r* is added for the comparative, and *st* for the superlative: this is the case with all adjectives ending in *e*. Other irregularities will be found, or, rather, other rules must be observed, in respect to some portions of this class of words. Thus, when the positive ends in *d*, *g*, or *t*, preceded by a single vowel, the *d*, *g*, or *t* is doubled: as

Red,	redder,	reddest.
Big,	bigger,	biggest.
Hot,	hotter,	hottest.

But if the *d*, *g*, and *t* are preceded not by a single vowel, but by a consonant or by two vowels, they are not doubled: as

Kind,	kinder,	kindest.
Neat,	neater,	neatest.

Many adjectives, however, can be reduced to no rule, but are exceptions: such are

Good,	better,	best.
Bad,	worse,	worst.
Little,	less,	least.
Much	more,	most.

There are some adjectives, however, which do not admit of these degrees of comparison; such as *all*, *each*, *every*, *any*, *several*, *some*; and all the numeral adjectives, as *one*, *two*, *three*; *first*, *second*, *third*, &c. To these may be added those which end in *most*, and which are superlative, and do not admit of change, such as *utmost*, *uppermost*, &c.

The degrees of comparison, in those adjectives which admit of them, are not only expressed by these various alterations in the



form of the words, but also and more usually by the words *more* and *most*, as signs of the comparative and superlative degree. We say *intricate, more intricate, most intricate*. For the employment of these words (*more* and *most*) for this purpose, no general rule can be laid down which does not admit of numerous exceptions. But it may be said, that generally adjectives of one syllable, and in some instances of two syllables, form their degrees of comparison by altering the word and adding to it *r* and *st* : while in some words in which the positive degree contains two syllables, and in all which have more than two, those degrees are marked by using the words *more* and *most*. Thus you would not say, *more fair*, but *fairer*, and you might say *pleasanter* or *tenderest*, but you would scarcely use *delicater* or *beautifullest*. But in such cases no rules will answer, and the ear must commonly be your only guide ; this will direct you to use *more delicate*, and *most beautiful*, as smoother and more agreeable modes of expression.

We have now to direct attention to another and most important sort of words called *verbs*. Unfortunately, here the name has no proper significance. The term *verb* literally means *word*, and not any particular sort of word. It seems as if grammarians, unable to find any appellation for such a numerous and important class of words, adopted this general designation to distinguish them ; or, as others have supposed, regarding verbs as the words of most importance, have assigned to them this name by way of eminence. A very useful writer on this subject has given an explicit, although very brief, description of this kind of words : "A verb," he observes, "expresses action, suffering, or a state of being, of some person or thing mentioned, and this with a reference to time." This definition must be amplified in order to be fully comprehended by those who have not previously studied the subject. It clearly marks out the three sorts of verbs, which are distinguished as *active*, *passive*, and *neuter*. Thus in the phrase, "*He walks a mile*," there is an action expressed ; the verb is therefore said to be *active*. But in that phrase, "*I am loved*," although there is an action alluded to, the verb employed refers to the object of the action rather than to the actor, and it is therefore called *passive*. Other verbs simply refer to a state of being, or express an action which is confined to the actor, such as, "*I live* : " here no action, but a state of being, is described. Again, "*I rise*" expresses an action ; yet it does not pass to another, but is confined to the author of the action, and describes the state or condition of rising : these are *neuter verbs*.

The careful student will observe here that which must have occurred to him in our previous remarks, and which will be more fully described hereafter, namely, that it is not the form of a word, its spelling merely, which shows us what kind of word it is, but its use, its sense, and the manner *in* which, and the object *for* which, it is employed. Hence while *to rise* is a neuter verb, because the action is confined within the actor; *to raise* is an active verb, because it implies an object, some man or thing raised.

Having thus noticed the different sorts of verbs, it will be necessary to state that there are four things to be observed in regard of this class of words; *person, number, time, and mood.*

If we call to mind what was said of *persons*, when treating of nouns and pronouns, very few words will suffice to apply this to the case of verbs. Nothing is of more importance to correct speaking than a clear understanding and careful observance of the rules which regulate this section of grammar. A verb in every sentence must agree both in number and person with its noun or pronoun, which is in the nominative case. "I write;" "He writes;" the first instance gives the pronoun in the first person, (the person that speaks about his own writing,) and this requires the verb also to be in its first person, *write*: it would be grossly improper to say, "I writes." In the other instance, the pronoun is in the third person, (the person spoken of as writing,) and it requires the verb to be in the same person, namely, in the form *writes*. To say, "He write," would be nonsense. Although, as already stated, it is of very great importance to observe this rule, it is easily done; for while there are three persons singular, and three persons plural, there are but two of them in which the form of the verb, according to rule, is altered; and those are the second and third person singular. Thus we say, "I write," "You write," "We write," "They write," and "Thou writest," "He, she, or it writes." Let this be carefully noted, as well as the pleasing alteration in the second person singular which has been effected by modern improvements, and which is described in the next paragraph.

There is a nicety in the employment of *the verb in the second person singular*, which must be scrupulously observed by every one who desires to be a clever speaker. In the holy scriptures the pronoun "thou," and not *you*, is uniformly applied in the singular number to every one who is separately addressed; which shows the faithfulness of the translators. But its use belongs



pre-eminently to the Divine Being. "*Thou art* the man," said Nathan to David; and, on a suitable occasion and in a very sparing manner, even in these our days of refinement, you may employ the same mode of speech when addressing an individual, instead of a class. We may also acknowledge with David:—"But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me. Thou hast smitten all mine enemies on the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly." This is the most sacred and proper use of the verb and pronoun in the second person and singular number; and all our solemn addresses to God, in public and in private, are couched in the same august and sublime language. Against two not uncommon abuses of the pronoun and verb in this relation I wish to warn you:—A proud and pampered upstart may sometimes be found in the act of "*thou-ing*," with evident satisfaction, all his menials and inferiors. "*Thou*" is likewise made the vehicle of ribald and low speech among many of the most ignorant and vulgar; and by some wits and humourists in their satirical compositions, in prose and verse, both ancient and modern. Much of its pungency, when thus employed, is supposed to be derived from contrast with its highest application to the Divine Being and to sacred topics. Every phrase of this description must be avoided.

But, in genuine English speech and writing, it has been the national practice, for some centuries, to discard the use of *thou* and its accompanying variation of the verb in the second person, with the few allowable exceptions mentioned in the preceding paragraph, and to adopt *you* in its place. Long before the days of the Plantagenets, our ancestors were wont to address royalty itself in these subdued and measured terms:—"Your majesty may be assured of the good intendments of us *your* loyal subjects in this matter." This sensible practice still prevails, and is uniformly adopted by all the educated ranks of society, and even by those who have not enjoyed the benefits of a good training at school, but who punctiliously observe it in a laudable spirit of imitation. You would be much shocked were you to be present when a rough fellow enters the cottage of an old acquaintance, whom he has not seen for many years, and cries out in a tone of low familiarity, "*How art thou, Bob? Are all these thy* lads and lasses?" None of you would utter such language before your most intimate friends: you would deem it a debasement of your character, and a hinderance to your usefulness. Your address would be somewhat after this manner:—"Well, friend Robert, I am glad to see you: I hope



you are very well! Are all these fine children *your* sons and daughters?" In the latter mode you will discover much of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ," much of that kindness and courtesy which Christianity inspires.

These remarks might, under other circumstances, have been profitably amplified; but they will suffice to point out the propriety of confining the use of the second person singular almost exclusively to the Deity, to whom we may reverently declare, "Thou art God, and thou alone!" The plural form for the second person is now also used for the same person in the singular number; so that the third person singular virtually presents the only alteration made in the form of the verb by number. It may not be amiss to call the attention of the student to the fact, that this change in the singular verb is made by adding *s* to the original word. Nouns so uniformly form their *plural* by this addition, that it may be necessary to remember, that, in respect of verbs, this is the sign of the *singular* number.

The number of verbs is equally simple and important. But, according to modern usage, the second and third persons singular alone are affected by it. The following table shows the changes effected by number on a regular verb:—

	Singular.	Plural.
First person,	I write,	We write.
Second person,	Thou writest,	You write.
Third person,	He, she, or it writes,	They write.

This is the rule: but its application to the second person singular is now fallen into disuse. When addressing an individual, we do not now say, *Thou writest*, which is accounted vulgar, but, *You write*.

The *tense* or *time* of verbs must next be considered. By this we mean the alteration which takes place in the form of the word, in order to express the time of an action or of any state of being. There are three such variations of time, or, as they are grammatically called, *tenses*;—the past, the present, and the future. These are indicated by the phrases, "I wrote;" "I write;" "I will write." This, of course, equally affects all the numbers and persons of verbs, and consequently introduces a great variety of inflexions.

Before giving any further examples of these changes, it may be well to advert to the moods of verbs, or the different *manners* of expressing an action or a state of being. As, for instance, we speak of a thing either positively, or conditionally and indeterminately. It may be said, "I write fast," or, "If I

write fast." These manners or moods of using verbs are four :—*infinitive, indicative, subjunctive, and imperative.*

The *infinitive* mood is the verb in its primitive state; as *to write, to walk*. It expresses the action of writing or walking without any constraint or limitation. It should also be observed, that the word *to*, which of itself is usually a preposition, in this instance constitutes a part of the verb, and is necessary to express the action intended to be described.

The *indicative* mood is that in which we express an action or state of being positively, and without any conditions whatever. It merely indicates the action or state of being, without reference to any influencing or dependent circumstances :—as, "I write;" "He writes."

The *subjunctive* mood is that form of the verb which we use when something contingent is subjoined to the action, or state of being, expressed by the verb: as, "*If he speak*, nobody regards him:" "*If I should call* upon him, he would not see me."

The *imperative* mood is that form of the verb which commands, orders, exhorts, or entreats :—as, "Come hither:" "Be good:" "Go directly:" "Pay me."

An important circumstance connected with verbs is the formation and use of *participles*. These are of two sorts, *active* and *passive*. The first of these ends in *ing*; and the latter is generally the same as the *past time* of the verb out of which it grows, and in regular verbs it always ends in *ed*. Thus *working* is an active participle, and *worked* a passive participle. These words are called *participles*, because they partake of the qualities of other parts of speech as well as of verbs. Thus, in the use of the active participle just mentioned, *working*; it may be said, "I am *working*;" "*Working* is laudable;" or, "A *working* man." In the first of these instances, *working* is a verb; in the second it is a noun; and in the third an adjective. The same remarks apply to the constitution and use of the passive participle.

We must next advert to those words which are called *auxiliary* verbs; and of which there are four, *to have* and *to be*, *to let* and *to do*. It will be seen that these are verbs expressing a distinct sense as other principal verbs. *To have*, for instance, implies possession; as, "*I have* a house." But, besides their use in this principal character, they serve as important auxiliaries in the formation of the inflexions of other verbs. Suppose, in speaking of working, I want to inform you that it is ended, that I have finished it. There is no form

of this verb that will accurately and fully express this sense of itself. To say, "I work," or, "I worked," will not express my meaning. I must say, "*I have worked.*" The verb *to be* is used in a similar manner. Indeed, not unfrequently both are used at the same time; as, "I have been:" "I had been," &c. *To do*, besides its use as a principal verb, is often employed to give energy and force to affirmative and negative sentences: as, "I do not work:" "I do not play." It is also often used interrogatively, as, "Do I write?" "Does he go?" *To let* is also used as an auxiliary, and especially to form the imperative mood of other verbs: as, "Let him go:" "Let us walk." There are other words used as auxiliary verbs; but as they are only employed in some of the moods and tenses, they are commonly called signs. They are, *will, would; can, could; shall, should; must, and ought*. *Will* and *shall* are constantly used to form the future tense of the indicative mood of other verbs; and *may, might, could, would, and should*, are used to form the subjunctive mood of other verbs.

Allusion has been already made to regular verbs: it therefore becomes necessary to notice the difference between regular and irregular. Those verbs are called regular which form their variations according to a certain rule or manner; and which have the past tense of the indicative and the passive participle ending in *ed*. Those verbs which do not follow this rule are called irregular. *To walk*, for instance, is regular, its past tense is *I walked*, and its participle *walked*. But *to write* is irregular; for its past tense is *I wrote*, and its participle *written*.

The *conjugation* of verbs is a detailed plan of all the variations made in all the various combinations of numbers, persons, moods, and tenses. Into this it is not now requisite to enter, since what has been previously said will enable the thoughtful student to compile such a table for himself.

The next sort of words which we shall notice is *adverbs*. This is a class of words chiefly used in connexion with verbs, to express more precisely or fully the manner or quality of actions, movements, or states of being: as, "John writes *well*," "Fanny sings *sweetly*." Here *well* and *sweetly* are adverbs, descriptive of the quality of the writing and singing. Although we have stated the junction of adverbs with verbs to be their principal use, they are sometimes employed in connexion with adjectives and other kinds of words. For instance, in the following passage:—"When you sow small seeds, make the earth *very* fine; and if it have *of late* been dry weather, take care to press the earth *extremely* hard upon the



seeds." Here are four adverbs, but the last is the only one that refers to a verb. Yet it will be seen, that they all add to the force and precision of the sentence.

There are five classes, or kinds, of adverbs; namely, those of quality or manner, those of time, of place, of order, and of quantity.

The first class, of quality or manner, is the most numerous; and is composed of words formed by adding *ly* to the adjective, as, *ably*, *badly*, *wisely*, *neatly*, *finely*, *strongly*, *coarsely*, &c. If the adjective end in *y*, it is changed into *i* in forming the adverb, as *happy* becomes *happily*; and if the adjective end in *le*, the *e* is dropped and *y* is added, as *possible* becomes *possibly*.

Adverbs of *time* are *now*, *presently*, *by-and-by*, *soon*, *while*, *when*, *then*, *yesterday*, *to-day*, *to-morrow*. When two or more words are joined together to form an adverb, they should be connected by a hyphen, as *TO-NIGHT*.

Adverbs of *place* are *here*, *there*, *where*, *hence*, *thence*, *whence*, *hither*, *thither*, *whither*, *no-where*, and some others.

Adverbs of *order* are *first*, *secondly*, *thirdly*, and *lastly*.

Adverbs of *quantity* are *little*, *less*, *least*, *much*, *more*, *most*, and a few others.

Some adverbs admit of comparison; as *soon*, *sooner*, *soonest*. Those formed from adjectives by adding *ly* are compared by the words *more* and *most*; as *more wisely*, *most wisely*.

We have now to call attention to another kind of words, which are called *prepositions*. This name means *placed before*, and is given to those words because they are in most cases placed before nouns and pronouns, as in this sentence:—"John sent a letter *to* his brother, and received one *from* him *on* the same day *by* the post." Here the words *to*, *from*, *on*, and *by*, are prepositions. *Of*, *with*, *into*, *at*, *about*, *against*, and many other words, easily distinguishable, belong to this class. The principal use of prepositions is to express the different relations or connexions which nouns and pronouns have with each other.

*Conjunctions* come next under our notice. These are used to join together words or parts of sentences. They are of two kinds, copulative and disjunctive. The copulative conjunctions are used to connect two or more nouns or pronouns with the action or state of being expressed by the verb: as, "John *and* Henry return to-morrow." The disjunctive conjunction refers the action or state of being, expressed by the verb, to the nouns or pronouns separately: as, "Thomas *or* Stephen returns to-

day." Conjunctions never vary in their form ; they are always spelt in the same way. In themselves they present no difficulty to the student ; although, as we shall have to notice hereafter, like every other kind of words, they will require a due share of attention, when employed in the construction of sentences.

Most writers on the English language speak of another sort of words, which they call *interjections*, a term which means *something thrown between*. They are, *Ah ! O ! Alas !* and similar exclamations. But these lack one essential quality of words,—they represent sound and feeling, but not sense or idea. For this reason the mere mention of them is sufficient for our purpose.

We have now, my dear brethren, to enter upon the third inquiry respecting words ; namely, the rules and regulations under which they are grouped together into sentences, in order to express the meaning intended by the speaker or writer.

Before fully engaging in this inquiry, it may be observed that this subject, although presenting no great difficulties, will nevertheless require close attention and careful thought. It will be necessary for you clearly to apprehend a fact to which allusion has been several times made incidentally in the preceding observations : it is this, that it is not *the spelling* of a word, but its sense, which determines its character, and shows to what class it belongs. Endeavour, therefore, by repeated reading and thought, to obtain a clear view of the several sorts of words of which we have spoken, so that when you employ a word, you may know precisely the manner in which it ought to be used, the purpose to which it is applicable, and consequently the part of speech to which in that sense it belongs, and the rules by which it is to be governed.

Words, when joined together for use, are formed into sentences ; and these are of two kinds, simple and compound. A sentence is a collection of words properly joined together so as to make a full and complete meaning. A simple sentence is a collection of words, which makes a complete sense, but in which the words do not require any separation or division, having only the full stop at the end ; as, "Charles studies theology." In a simple sentence there is but one subject and one personal verb. A compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences, so connected by conjunctions or relatives as to make one complete sense : as, "He who preserves me, whose I am, and whom I ought to serve, is eternal." This

sentence contains the following distinct assertions:—"He is eternal"—"who preserves me:"—"whose I am"—"and whom I ought to serve."

Besides sentences, there are other combinations of words which merit a passing notice. *A phrase* consists of two or more words put together to express a certain relation between our ideas, without affirming anything; as, "A man of piety." In such a combination of words something is taken for granted or assumed, but nothing is asserted. If, however, we go on to say, "A man of piety aims at pleasing God," we make an assertion, and complete the sentence. A phrase therefore is an assemblage of words without a finite verb.

*An idiom* is a form of words which is peculiar to any given nation or language. Thus in English we say, "I am short of money." The corresponding words in Latin would mean "Money is wanting to me." In English we ask, "What o'clock is it?" In French, "What hour is it?"

Before we proceed, we may briefly advert to the useful points, or, as they are more frequently called, stops, which are so necessary in the construction of sentences. Their chief use is to make the construction of a sentence clear, by showing which of the words in it relate to each other. They afford also considerable aid in correcting pronunciation, by showing how the several parts of a sentence, and how whole sentences, stand related to each other.

*The period*, or full stop, (.) is used to mark the termination of a sentence; as, "Fear God." "Honour the king." *The colon* (:) is employed to divide a sentence into different members or branches. The part separated by this mark sometimes contains a complete sense, and always nearly approaches it: as, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider." *The semicolon* (;) is used to distribute a sentence into two or more members, which yet have some connexion in meaning: "And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth by shall be astonished, and shall hiss because of all the plagues thereof." *The comma* (,) is used to mark the shortest pause in reading, and the smallest divisions in writing; and thus to distinguish parts of a sentence, which belong to one general branch or member, and to show which words are most intimately connected, and which are not so dependent on each other: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." Our



English Bible may be regarded as the best model we have for punctuation in the language. Besides these points, there are other marks used in writing, which may here be noticed. *The parenthesis*, ( ), is used to enclose words which are introduced for illustration or proof, but which may be omitted in reading without injuring the sense of the rest: as, "And was the ransom paid? It was; and paid (what can exalt the bounty more?) for thee." *The hyphen* (-), or short line, which is used to unite one or more words together so as to make one new word, such as "tea-pot," "son-in-law." *The sign of exclamation* (!) is used to mark words expressing surprise or astonishment: "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place!" *The sign of interrogation* marks the asking of a question: as, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" *The dash* (—) is used perhaps much more frequently than it should be, and our best writers advise us to employ it sparingly. It seems very properly introduced in the case of an abrupt transition in the sense of the writer: as,

"Here lies the great—False marble, where?—  
Nothing but sordid dust lies here."

In pursuing our inquiry into the rules which regulate the construction of sentences, we will refer to each sort of words that has been named, and supply what is necessary on this head, in addition to the information already given. This branch of the science of words is technically called SYNTAX. There are important matters relating to nouns and their agreement with verbs, which must receive careful attention, but which will be more suitably discussed when we speak of the last-mentioned sort of words. A single observation may be made in respect of the possessive case of nouns, when several nouns are employed. You, for instance, read, "Charles, William, and John's estate:" Or "Charles's, William's, and John's estate." The difference between these forms of language is not a matter of taste; but the result of a rule adapted to give precision to language. In the former sentence, where there is but one sign of the possessive case, you are taught to understand that but one estate is spoken of, which is the joint property of Charles, William, and John; while in the latter, from the different form of language employed, you learn that there are three estates, one belonging to each of the men.

In addition to what has been said respecting the rules which regulate the use of articles, it may be added, that the indefinite

article is joined to nouns in the singular number only ; as *an army, a man, a people, a flock*. You cannot say, "a horses," or "an onions." Care must therefore be taken, when one article is used in respect of several nouns, that it agrees with every one of them. You may properly say, "a peach, plum, and pear," but not "a peach, plums, and pear." Nor should nouns be thus connected together which require a different indefinite article ; as, "a peach, orange, and apple ;" because in this sentence the *a* is regarded as virtually repeated before each noun, and it does not agree with *orange*, or *apple* ; that sentence should therefore be expressed thus :—"a peach, an orange, and an apple."

Some additional information respecting the syntax of pronouns must also be given. When nouns are united by a copulative conjunction, the pronoun relating to them must be in the plural number ; as, "John *and* Henry called upon me ; but *they* did not stay." But if a disjunctive conjunction is used, the pronoun must be singular ; as, "John *or* Henry called ; but *he* could not wait." In reference to nouns of multitude, a careful observance of the rule enables a writer fully to convey his meaning, and the reader precisely to apprehend it. In speaking of *the Parliament, the conference, or a committee*, if the idea is to express the action of any one of these, as of an united body, the singular pronoun should be used, and we should say, "*It* enacted ;" or, "*It* resolved." But if it is intended to describe this action as the concurrent operation of the many persons composing those bodies, then we should say, "After a long debate, *they* enacted ;" "Having discussed several amendments, *they* passed a resolution."

It has been truly observed in respect of personal pronouns, that "to use the objective instead of the nominative is a *vulgar* error ; to use the nominative instead of the objective is a *genteel* error." The first frequently says, "*Him* and *me* are going to walk ;" instead of, "He and I." The second commits an equal blunder, by employing the phrases, "They are coming to see my brother and I ;" "Let you and I try to move it :;" instead of, "They are coming to see my brother and me ;" "Let you and me try to move it." The relative pronouns should, as already observed, be used with great circumspection. Not one of these, in fact, can ever be employed with propriety, unless the writer or speaker preserves a distinct recollection of the noun or pronouns to which it relates, or whose place it supplies, and unless he knows that it is suitable to stand in such a relation.



There are some further rules respecting the use of pronouns of great importance to correct speaking and writing. Pronouns must agree with the nouns which they represent in gender, number, and person; as, "John Wesley and *his* coadjutors were devoted men." "Richard Watson and Adam Clarke discharged *their* duty." Personal pronouns must not be used for *these* and *those*. Personal pronouns are used instead of nouns; *these* and *those* have always nouns joined to them, either expressed or understood; we should not therefore say, "Give me *them* books;" but, "Give me *those* books."

In respect of relative pronouns observe, that the relative must always be in the same number, gender, and person as its antecedent, and the verb must agree with it accordingly; as, "*He* is unworthy of confidence *who* has betrayed his trust." "*The minister who* officiated was very eloquent." In the first instance *he* is the antecedent, and *who* the relative. In the second, *minister* is the antecedent, and *who* the relative. As an observance of this rule is of vital consequence to correct speaking and writing, it is always desirable to place the relative as near the antecedent as possible. Thus you might say without violation of rule, "The master punished the boy for disobedience, who never chastises without a reason;" but it is infinitely better to place the words thus:—"The *master, who* never chastises without a reason, punished the boy," &c.

On the syntax of adjectives it may be requisite to warn some of you against double comparatives and double superlatives, which an untutored mind may use for the purpose of adding strength or force to his language; but which are altogether inadmissible: such as *chiefest, more deeper, supremest, most strongest*. Attention is also recommended to the principle which has already been laid down; namely, that *the sense*, and not *the form*, of a word determines its kind. Consequently, when words, which are usually adjectives, are used as nouns, they must be treated in all respects as nouns: as, "*The murder of the innocents*." "*The virtuous* are often unfortunate, while the *guilty* prosper." Here the words *innocents, virtuous*, and *guilty* are nouns, because they signify innocent and virtuous persons and guilty persons.

Another rule necessary to be observed here is the following:—"Every adjective, and every adjective pronoun, must agree with some substantive expressed or understood; and adjective pronouns must agree in number with their substantives." As, "He is *a good* as well as *a wise man*." "*Few* are happy;" that is, few persons. "The *twelve*," meaning *the twelve*



apostles. "*This* man;" "*These* men;" "*That* set of books was a valuable present." Further observe, that when two persons or things have been already noticed in a sentence, and it is necessary to speak of them again without repeating the nouns, we should use *this* in reference to the one which has been last mentioned; and *that*, to the one which preceded it: as, "Knowledge and wisdom are very different: *this* induces us to do what is right, and *that* to know what is right." Here *this* refers to *wisdom*, the nearest; and *that* to *knowledge*, which is at the greatest distance. Care should always be taken that adjectives be not used for adverbs, nor adverbs for adjectives. Thus you say, "He is *warm*," or, "He feels *warm*;" meaning he is in a warm state. And it is properly said, "He feels *warmly* the insult offered to him." Again: "He always appears (to be) *neat*." "He dresses *neatly*." In these examples the adjectives and adverbs cannot be interchanged. The words, *each*, *every*, *either*, *neither*, require nouns, pronouns, and verbs to be in the third person, singular number; as, "Let *each* of them be heard in *his* turn." "*Every* man is accountable for *himself*."

In considering syntax as relating to verbs, we come into the grand centre of the science of words. If we can fully apprehend the laws which regulate the use of verbs in relation to other parts of speech, we may hope to know something important and practical respecting the correct manner of forming words into sentences. One thing which enhances the importance of the rules which regulate verbs and their connexion with other words is this,—there must be a verb in every sentence. Whatever other words may be present or absent, a verb *must* be expressed or understood.

It is highly necessary that we pay attention to what are called *understood* words, to which reference has already frequently been made, especially as we are constantly using phrases which are called elliptical; that is, in employing them we do not, as it were, go quite round the circle, and utter or write every word which is necessary to complete the sense; but, on the contrary, we omit some of them which are fully understood, both by speaker and hearer. Thus: "He told me that he had given John the book, which the printer brought the other night." Now every one fully understands this; yet you will see that we have omitted several words necessary to the completion of the sentence. *Given John the book*, is not a complete phrase. The whole fully set forth, would stand thus: "He told *to* me that he had given *to* John the book which the printer brought *to this*

*place on the other night.*" It is not unfrequently the case that a word so understood may have what is called a power to *govern* the form of other words employed. So that while we by no means encourage the adoption of the stiff circumlocution, which would result from the abandonment of all elliptical phrases, we advise the young student, in all cases of doubt, to supply these understood words in his own mind, by which means he will probably find that they solve his difficulty. It is not expedient for me to take you through all the rules that have been laid down for our guidance in respect of the proper employment of verbs in sentences; but I will call your attention to two or three which are of the greatest consequence.

First, then, verbs must agree in number and person with the nouns or pronouns which are the nominatives of the sentence. You have been told, that the nominative is the person or thing which is represented as performing an action. To this information we may add, that when any person or thing is represented as being or doing, the noun or pronoun representing such person or thing is in the nominative case. As, "Charles *teaches* John." Charles is here the nominative as the actor, and is a noun in the third person singular; and *teaches* is a verb of the same number and person; and therefore the words are correctly placed together. But if we say, "Charles and Thomas *teaches* John;" or, "Thomas *teach* John and Charles," we violate this fundamental law of our language. For, in the first instance, "Charles and Thomas" make a plural nominative which requires after it the plural verb *teach*: as "Charles and Thomas *teach* John." So, in the next instance, where the plural verb *teach* is connected with the singular nominative Thomas, it should, of course, be, "Thomas *teaches* John and Charles." For the agreement is required between the nominative and the verb, and Thomas is the actor, and consequently the nominative, and whether one or twenty nouns follow the verb, they, being obviously by their position in the objective case, do not affect the form of the verb. When nouns represent being or existence in any state or condition, the same rule applies. "Charles *is* reading." "He *is* walking." "John and Henry *are* riding." All these are quite correct: the nominative is followed by the verb in the same number and person as itself. We have, however, sometimes heard people say, "He *are* reading." "They *is* going to town." "John, Thomas, and Henry *is* thinking of emigrating." In all these cases the error is manifest. In the first, the verb is plural following a singular nominative; in the two following there is a singular verb

following a plural nominative. They should therefore be written, "He is reading." "They are going to town." "John, Thomas, and Henry are thinking of emigrating." But in all cases care must be taken that the ear does not mislead the judgment. Taught and trained to use the last-mentioned form of words, some persons have been induced to use the following phraseology: "John, Thomas, or Henry are about to emigrate." But this is wrong; for here, although there are three nouns, there is but a singular nominative, the disjunctive conjunction *or* making the sense of the words to be, that one person of the three is about to emigrate; and hence, if this be intended as the speaker's meaning, the passage should stand thus: "John, Thomas, or Henry is about to emigrate."

The second rule applying to verbs is this: The verb *to be* has the same case after it as it has before it. As, "*I am he.*" Here *I*, the first person singular in the nominative case, precedes the verb; and *He*, the third person singular, nominative case, follows it. So in the following: "*It was she.*" "*It is they.*" "*I supposed him to be the person.*"

We have in the foregoing observations noticed some examples of that kind of agreement, which the rules of our language require between different sorts of words, and which is called "concord." Such, for instance, is the agreement between the nominative of a sentence and the verb; between an adjective and a substantive; and between a relative and its antecedent. This agreement you will have perceived to be a most essential requisite to correct writing or speaking. It is called "concord," because of the necessity for a mutual accordance between the pairs of words to which I have referred. There is another kind of agreement which we shall now have to notice, and which is called "government." This arises out of the power which one word has, in requiring another to be in a particular mood, tense, or case. We may illustrate the nature of this, by stating and explaining another important rule; namely, "Active verbs govern nouns and pronouns in the objective case;" that is, the noun or pronoun must be conformed to the active verb describing the action of which it is the object. Thus, "They support *us*." "Virtue rewards *her* followers." "Alexander conquered *the Persians*." All this appears very natural; and it is always desirable that the objective form should not be separated from its verb. When it is otherwise, the rule of which we are speaking is frequently violated; as in the following instances:—"Who should I esteem more than the wise and good?" "Those are the men *who* he thought



true to his interests." In these cases the objective, coming before the verb, is erroneously supplied by a pronoun in an improper case. These sentences should be written, "*Whom* should I esteem," &c. "Those are the men *whom*," &c.

Another instance of this kind of relation between different sorts of words is found in the fact, that "prepositions govern the objective case:" as, "*From him* that is needy turn not away." "We may be good and happy *without riches*." In the latter instance the effect of this law is not seen, because the objective case following the preposition is a noun, and it does not change its form. For whether *riches* be in the nominative or the objective, it is spelt alike. It is, however, in the objective case in this sentence. But in the former passage we clearly see the rule exemplified. "*From him*," &c. Here we have the pronoun in the objective case; and it must be so, because the preposition imperatively requires it. You cannot with propriety say, "*From I, or he, or she*;" but, *From me, thee, him, her, or it*, may, according to circumstances, be used. For prepositions govern the objective case.

To these may be added two or three other directions. Never use two negatives in a sentence, as in English they destroy each other; the passage has in consequence an affirmative meaning which is much better expressed affirmatively. "*Nor* did they *not* perceive him;" that is, they did perceive him. "*His language, although inelegant, is not ungrammatical*;" that is, it is grammatical.

Again: "All the parts of a sentence should correspond to each other; a regular and dependent construction should be carefully maintained throughout." The following sentence is therefore inaccurate: "Thomas was more beloved, but not so much admired, as Charles." This inaccuracy will be avoided and uniformity introduced into the whole sentence, by placing the words thus: "Thomas was more beloved than Charles, but not so much admired."

We have thus given, as fully as our limits allow, the principal of those rules which direct and regulate the arrangement of words into sentences. We have, in the next place, to notice the importance of a proper pronunciation of words and sentences. We use this phrase advisedly; for it marks out the two grand divisions of this important branch of knowledge,—the sound, or correct pronunciation of separate words,—and the proper enunciation of these, when grouped into sentences and paragraphs.

In respect of the first particular, I must, of course, assume that you are in possession of a certain amount of knowledge. For although throughout these Lectures I have frequently trespassed on those of my brethren who have been favoured with early opportunities of acquiring knowledge, that I may by this means meet the necessity of those who have been deprived of such advantages; yet neither the occasion nor our space will allow of a detailed account of the various sounds of the several letters of the alphabet, the laws by which syllables are formed, and the numerous modifications which the sounds of letters undergo in combination. Yet all these are important elements of knowledge for all who wish to use their mother tongue in an intelligent manner. A good dictionary for the acquirement of the meaning of words has been already recommended; and in procuring this, the student will do well to select one which also gives the pronunciation of the words. It may, however, be noted, that the careful observance of the pronunciation of the best speakers, and a steady attention to the proper manner of enunciating words, will do much towards inducing an exemption from serious error in this particular, which is perhaps one of the most difficult to teach in a satisfactory manner by written directions. It requires only slight observation to perceive that a great number of the words in our language are not pronounced as they are spelled, but in a very different manner. You have only to speak the following words, *plough, cough, though*, to perceive that the same letters in different connexions are pronounced in a very different manner. Yet the acquirement of a correct pronunciation, if sought early in life, say at or before the age of twenty, is far from being difficult; and, even long after that age, serious faults and defects may be effectually cured. In order to this, many directions are not necessary: one simple observance will be sufficient; namely, steady and constant application to the subject. Dr. Johnson is reported to have been asked by what means he acquired the art of conversing with such exact propriety of language, that any sentence falling from his lips might be written down and printed without alteration or correction: to which the eminent man is said to have replied thus: "When very young, it occurred to me that what I had to do very frequently, I ought to be able to do very well; knowing, therefore, that I should have to speak perhaps more frequently than to do any thing else, I set myself every time I spoke to express myself in the best possible manner, and have in consequence acquired the habit of speaking with tolerable accuracy." Is not this example worthy of imitation?

I am well aware that vain young persons may carry their endeavours to excel to such an extent, as to render themselves ridiculous for affectation and pedantry. But ought this abuse of the thing to prevent sober, serious, sensible men from acquiring the power of expressing themselves with propriety? I have known clever men declare, "I will carefully study the substance of my discourse; and if persons demur to the manner of its delivery, I shall regard them as unworthy of consideration." But why should a sensible discourse be delivered in a slovenly manner? Is not such conduct like that of the person who studiously prepared an excellent dinner for his friends, and of set purpose had it served up on a dirty table-cloth and with dirty plates, knives, and forks? Who does not see the folly of such conduct? No one is more sensible than I am, that the Head of the church, in the exercise of his Divine prerogative "to send by whom he will send," frequently thrusts out sanctified persons into spheres of usefulness for which by human judgment they would not be thought qualified; and that it is our duty to meet their infirmities and failings with all Christian kindness and forbearance. Still the person thus called owes a duty to his God, to his call, and to his hearers, to make these infirmities as few and as unimportant as possible. Error or vulgarity is not to be cultivated and cherished, much less to be made the occasion of vanity or pride.

Before passing from this topic, however, I will offer a few words on *accent* and *quantity*. *Accent* is that stress of the voice with which one syllable of a word is pronounced in relation to others. This demand for the stress of the voice, by raising it or depressing it, is indicated by a small mark being placed over the syllable on which the stress is to be laid. Thus, *ac'cent* shows that the stress is to be laid on the first syllable of the word; *etymólogy*, that here it is placed on the third; whilst in *etymológical*, it must rest on the fourth. No general rule can be given for the placing of the accent; your attention to good speakers and frequent consultation with your pronouncing dictionary, are the most efficient means to the successful acquirement of this art. It may, however, be desirable to notice the fact, that the accent in many instances shows the sense in which a word is used, and indeed the sort of word which it is in that sense. A'bsent, ábstract, aúgment, cóntest, dígest, fréquent, tor'ment, and numerous other words accented on the first syllable, are nouns. But all these words are used also as verbs, and then they are invariably accented on the second syllable. Thus, if you say, "a dígest of statute law,"



you speak the word differently from its pronunciation when you say, "to digést food;" and so if you speak of "a place of tor'ment," the sound is very different from "to tormént." In the one case the stress of the voice is placed on the first, and in the other on the second, syllable. As all words of two syllables have one, and but one, syllable accented, this is a very important consideration. These may be taken as examples of the rule, although there are a few words which when used in combination with others are exceptions, such as *di-rect*, *some-times*, &c., or when we properly lay an equal stress on both syllables. These, however, when pronounced alone, are always accented only on one syllable. The solitary exception to this rule is the word *amen*, which, even when pronounced alone, has both syllables delivered with equal force.

In speaking of *quantity*, we allude only to the relative length of syllables in single words, such as is seen between the word *fat* and the first syllable of *father*. We simply call attention to this point; our limits do not allow even of an outline of the rules which regulate the sounds of the different vowels in this respect. The student, by the means so often suggested, will soon obtain a competent amount of information on this subject.

We pass on to a consideration of the proper pronunciation of words when grouped together in sentences, and thus delivered in consecutive order. Here, as a first consideration, we notice *emphasis*. As accent gives prominence to some syllable of a word; so emphasis, by giving a stronger and fuller sound to a particular word in a sentence, points out the sense, and gives force and energy to the meaning of the passage. So requisite is this to effective reading and speaking, that it has been called "the life of discourse."

Not only is this the case, but emphasis is frequently essential to give a sense to words, which without it become dubious and of uncertain import. The following question is frequently cited as an illustration of this: "Do you ride to town to-day?" This question is capable of four different senses, according to the application of the emphasis. If the person putting this inquiry wished to ascertain whether the party addressed was going to town himself, or to send another person in his stead, he would place the emphasis on the word *you*: "Do *you* ride to town to-day?" But if he wished to know whether the person would *ride*, or go in any other manner, he would place the emphasis on that word, and say, "Do you *ride* to town to-day?" While if it was desirable for him to know whether the party would ride to town, or go to any other place, the

question would be put thus, "Do you ride to *town* to-day?" And if the doubt was whether this ride was to take place on that day or at any future time, he would say, "Do you ride to town *to-day*?" So that by speaking the words *printed in italics* with emphatic force, this short sentence would convey these four several distinct senses.

The following passage, quoted from Murray, is given to show that, although the quantity of syllables is fixed by specific rules as it respects the pronunciation of single words, these rules, when the words are arranged into sentences, are frequently overruled by the situation of the emphasis; and syllables are consequently rendered long or short according to the sense which they are intended to convey:—

"Pleas'd thōu shalt hear—and learn the secret power, &c.,  
Pleas'd thōū shalt hear—and thou alone shalt hear—  
Pleas'd thou shalt hear—in spite of them, shalt hear  
Pleas'd thōū shalt hear—though not behold, the fair."

"In the first of these instances, the words *pleas'd* and *hear* being equally emphatical, are both long; whilst the two intermediate, *thou* and *shalt*, being rapidly passed over as the sense demands, are reduced to a short quantity.

"In the second instance, the word *thou*, by being the most important, obtains the chief, or rather the sole, emphasis; and thus it is not only restored to its natural long quantity, but obtains from emphasis a still greater degree of length than when pronounced in a separate state. This greater degree of length is compensated by the diminution of quantity in the words *pleas'd* and *hear*, which are sounded shorter than in the preceding instance. The word *shalt* still continues short. Here we may also observe, that though *thou* is long in the first part of the verse, it becomes short when repeated in the second, on account of the more forcible emphasis belonging to the word *alone* which follows it.

"In the third instance, the word *shalt*, having the emphasis, obtains a long quantity. And though it is impossible to prolong the sound of this word, as it ends in a pure mute, yet in this, as in all similar instances, the additional quantity is to be made out by a rest of the voice, proportioned to the importance of the word. In this instance, we may again observe that the word *shalt*, repeated in the second part of the line, is reduced again to a short quantity.

"In the fourth instance, the words *hear*, placed in opposition to the word *behold*, in the latter part of the line, obtains

from the sense the chief emphasis, and a proportionate length. The words *thou* and *shalt* are again reduced to short quantities, and the word *pleas'd* lends some of the time which it possessed, to the more important word *hear*. From these instances it is evident, that the quantity of our syllables is not fixed, but governed by emphasis. To observe a due measurement of time, on all occasions, is doubtless very difficult; but by instruction, attention, and practice, the difficulty may be overcome."

The difficulty of which the learned grammarian speaks, is greatly increased by a circumstance which he has not mentioned, but which is of great consequence. In all these cases, the necessary emphasis, with all its effect on the lengthening and shortening of syllables, must be fully applied before the reader comes to the causes of these changes. You will observe, that the first four words of these several lines are all exactly alike, and would, of course, be read alike, and consequently in an unmeaning manner, unless the eye, trained to anticipate the voice, apprehends the purport of the latter part of the line before the beginning of it is pronounced; and the judgment on this information decides on the proper enunciation of the words.

In addition to this, it should be noted, that emphasis not only affects the quantity of syllables, but frequently reverses their established accent. You will see this to be the case in the following instances:—"He must *in'crease*, but I must *de'crease*." "There is difference between giving and *forgiving*."

After what has been said, you will naturally expect some directions to guide you in respect of placing the emphasis correctly, and will perhaps feel some disappointment at hearing that all that can be said on this point is just this:—Study to obtain a just conception of the force and spirit of the sentiments you are about to deliver, and allow this to direct you in respect of the emphasis throughout. Emphasis, indeed, is nothing more than the natural effect of the sense and power of the sentiments delivered, marked, in the intonations of the speaker, by their effect on his mind, and thus conveyed to the hearer. Artificial rules on this particular can only be misleading. A person of sound judgment and good taste, knowing and feeling his subject fully, will impress on his delivery all those intonations which constitute a correct application of emphasis. We have therefore to acquire these abilities, that we may possess this power.



Yet it may be safely said, that the person who is but just beginning to direct his attention to a correct manner of delivery, will seldom feel it difficult to select many words which he may consider to be emphatic. It will, therefore, be a great mark of wisdom in him to avoid making a large selection, but rather to reduce their number. A very general fault of speakers, and especially of young speakers, is to lay the emphasis on so many words as to damage the sense of their discourse, and to distress their hearers. If, therefore, we venture any advice to such, beyond what is given above, it will be this:—Avoid by every means an unmeaning emphasis, which can only give an apparent force to language, by sound at the expense of sense. Rather aim at delivering your words in an even tone of voice, and only give an emphatic force to a word, when its necessity, or at least its certain propriety, is undoubted.

To you, my brethren, who have constantly to recite our beautiful hymns in couplets, to public congregations, it may be necessary just to observe, that, in performing this duty, not only must you carefully observe the proper accent and emphasis, but also the rhythm. Nothing can be finer than the beautiful stanzas of Charles Wesley, when properly delivered; scarcely any thing more painful to a correct and well-trained mind, than to hear them read in a careless or unmeaning “sing-song manner.” To avoid such an evil, and acquire the power to read correctly, is worth careful attention and effort; and these will enable you to succeed.

It will be necessary here to notice that remarkable development of power, illustration, and ornament, which has been introduced into discourse under the title of “figurative language.” Holy scripture is pervaded with instances of this description in every variety. Our Saviour said of Herod:—“Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.” By these words it was not intended to convey the idea, that the king of Judea was a fox; but that he exhibited in his public life the characteristics by which that animal is distinguished. To some extent this departure from the literal meaning of words is imbedded in our language, and we employ it every time we use the terms “hard-hearted,” “stiff-necked,” or the like.

But, without going into the whole question, we may briefly notice the principal developements of figurative language under two general heads. A careful examination of the whole subject would lead to the conclusion which Dr Blair has placed before

us ; namely, that this departure from the simple sense of language takes place under the influence of the imagination or of the passions. Under these two aspects we will notice their more prominent manifestations.

The principal figures of the imagination are *metaphor*, *allegory*, *comparison*, *personification*, and *antithesis* ; to which may be added *vision* and *climax*. *Metaphor* is a similitude reduced to a single word, or a word expressive of similitude without the signs of comparison. Thus, "That man is a fox," "The Lord is my rock," are metaphors. But when we say, "That man is like a fox," we do not employ metaphor, but a similitude. An *allegory* is a continued metaphor. The eightieth Psalm is a very beautiful instance of this figure. The difference between a parable and an allegory is, that a parable is a supposed history, while an allegory is a figurative description of real facts. A *comparison* or *simile* is very similar to metaphor, but differing from it ; for, in the former case, the similitude is formally expressed. *Personification* is the ascription of life and action to inanimate bodies ; as, "O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?" No figure is more frequently used than this, and, when employed with judgment, is capable of producing a greater effect. *Antithesis* is a figure which stands in opposition to comparison ; the latter being based on similitude, the former on contrast : as, "The prodigal robs his heir—the miser robs himself." "Liberty *with* laws ; and government *without* oppression." *Vision* is a figure by which a speaker or writer describes his subject as passing immediately under the eye of the party addressed, or as immediately visible to the speaker. *Amplification* or *climax* is a manner of speaking by which, beginning with the least important matters, and passing to those next in the order of importance, the speaker closes with the highest possible part of the subject. We have a fine instance of this in part of an address of Cicero to Catiline : "Thou doest nothing, movest nothing, thinkest nothing, but I hear it, I see it, and perfectly understand it."

We now notice those figures which arise out of the influence of the passions : these are *hyperbole*, *apostrophe*, *exclamation*, and *interrogation*. *Hyperbole* consists in a suitable and judicious exaggeration, by which the strength of the language is increased ; as, "Whiter than snow : " "Less than nothing." *Apostrophe* is generally based on personification, and proceeds beyond it, by addressing the subject or thing impersonated, as, "O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ?" *Exclamation* is a passionate expression, which

vividly sets forth the speaker's meaning. We can scarcely have a finer example of this than the opening passage of the Book of Lamentations: "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!" *Interrogation* is a figurative mode of strong affirmation, by placing the language in the form of a question. As, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

It may be necessary to give some hints as to the employment of these various figures in our addresses. In the first place we would advise you never to seek an occasion to introduce this kind of language. Nothing can be more offensive than forced figures. Secondly. Even when they are naturally suggested to the mind by the subject, they should be used sparingly. When used in abundance, they mar, instead of improving, the effect of a discourse. Thirdly. When you do use them, be consistent. Do not confound figure with figure, or blend figurative and plain language in the same sentence. Avoid the blunder found in the celebrated lines:—

"To thee the world its present homage pays;  
The *harvest* early, but mature the *praise*."

Here the poet might have said, in plain language, "The offering early, but mature the praise." But having introduced the figurative word *harvest*, he should have been consistent, and have added, "but mature the crop," or have used some other word agreeing with the figure. Fourthly. Great care should be taken not to select figures offensive to good taste. The increased strength which figurative language imparts to discourse, greatly enhances the offensiveness of any low or improper expressions when so introduced. Fifthly. Care should be taken not to introduce passionate figures, unless the nature of the subject require them. To place such in plain, descriptive, or didactic discourses, is, to say the least, ill-judged.

I have performed all I intended as to giving rules for knowing, arranging, and pronouncing words; and, before we come to a few closing observations, let me again call your attention to the wonderful agency with which we are now concerned. Has it appeared tedious to you to consider one rule after another? to persevere in study until you have fully comprehended their bearing? Have you turned away in your mind



and purpose in the midst of the effort, and given it up as a hopeless affair? Let me entreat you to consider the time, the cost, the labour, the knowledge necessary to collect, arrange, train, equip, and bring into the field a great army. Yet no large and well-organized army that entered on a career of conquest ever possessed the means of making such an impression on the character and destiny of our fallen world as the right use of words possesses. To frustrate and prevent the further insidious communications of folly, ignorance, and sin, would be to relieve our planet from the weightiest portion of the curse under which it labours. To imbue the sanctified mind of our land with the power of correct and forcible utterance, is to place in the service of the Saviour the mightiest means which earth can contribute to the extension of his kingdom. In fact, *words make the world what it is*. No other agent contributes in any approximate ratio to this, in respect of practical influence. Why, then, should those who have the most glorious theme, the most splendid overtures of mercy and loving-kindness to propound, the most astonishing truths to proclaim,—why should they sully their message by ignorance and error in the medium of its communication? We ought to avoid this as a great evil. Nay, I verily believe, as far as our means of acquiring knowledge extend, we cannot innocently do otherwise. We are bound, by love and fealty to our Saviour, to offer to our perishing brethren the message of Divine Love, by the hallowed and improved gift of speech, in a manner as agreeable and as effective as possible.

Nor let it for a moment be supposed, that these rules of speech and laws of language are to be regarded amongst the artificial inventions which have been introduced for the sake of show, polish, or appearance: on the contrary, they are the necessary and essential principles inwrought into the structure of our mother-tongue, and never can be violated without damaging the sense of the communications which we make.

I can easily conceive that persons who have never studied the elements of language, may regard an observance of these laws as exceedingly detrimental to the influence of religious feeling, if not quite opposed to its action, in the delivery of a discourse. Yet some of these persons will sing our beautiful hymns, to equally beautiful music, in the full enjoyment of spiritual liberty. The truth is, they have so fully acquired a knowledge of the tune, that, instead of its occupying their thought, or burdening their memory, it actually enables them to realise more fully the scope and meaning of the spiritual

poetry of which it becomes the fascinating vehicle. So it is with a knowledge of language. A person who has mastered the simple, primary, and essential laws of grammar, not only speaks with a liberty and ease quite equal to any that the boldest of the uninstructed can feel; but he does so, supported by the consciousness that he says what he means to say, of which the other is never certain. A well-qualified speaker is no more trammelled by his accurate knowledge of language, than the person is who sings a hymn according to the tune; or than the man who reads a chapter is encumbered with the process by which he obtained a competent knowledge of letters.

It must not, however, be supposed that we have done all that is necessary, in regard to the study of words, when we have acquired a sufficient knowledge of the laws of our language to save us from error in the construction of our sentences. On the contrary, we have just then obtained the power to employ our further studies with the greatest effect. Words are the vehicles of thought, the grand means of intercourse between human minds. The revelation of Divine grace is made to us in words, and is called the *word of salvation*. It is by this means we are to announce the glad tidings of the gospel to the world. Are we then to be careless as to the use of this one great and grand agency? We shall place this point, perhaps, in the clearest and strongest point of view by inquiring, What are the principal features which, in respect of language, ought to characterise a religious discourse designed to awaken sinners, and edify the church of Christ? We will endeavour to supply an answer to this inquiry, in a way that shall illustrate and confirm the views already expressed.

First, then, in such a discourse the words ought to be carefully selected and arranged, so as to convey the sense intended in a clear and suitable manner.

No one will imagine that words used at random will produce this effect. The first thing, therefore, which a speaker has to do, is to satisfy himself, by careful inquiry, that he attaches a correct sense to the words which he employs, and, as far as he possibly can, that he uses every word with a fixed and determinate meaning. Nothing is more common than to hear persons use words interchangeably to express the same idea. It is well to do this, for the sake of variety and to avoid monotony, when it can be done with clearness and correctness. But caution and knowledge are necessary to enable a man to effect this with propriety and success. I may illustrate this

difficulty by the mention of a fact. I have before me a quarto volume, entitled, "ENGLISH SYNONYMES." Now, as the word "synonyme" is a term applied to a word which is supposed to have the same meaning as another given word, this book, as might be expected, is a kind of dictionary where words of similar or analogous import are grouped together under about six thousand prominent terms; to all these words are appended short explanations, showing the precise meaning of every one. Yet, notwithstanding the name given to the work, it clearly establishes the fact,—that there are no two words of exactly similar import in all our language. For it is occupied throughout in showing the points of difference, or partial agreements, in the meaning of all those words which, at first sight, seem to be of the same import. Of course I do not deny, that, for general purposes, such words as *valour* and *courage*, *virtue* and *goodness*, *vice* and *wickedness*, may be regarded as conveying the same general sense; yet even each of these, and all others, when carefully scrutinized, will be found to possess their own individual shades of meaning.

To this point careful attention should be paid. When words are used in a general sense, these minute inflections of meaning may be overlooked; but, when employed in a strict and limited manner, they should be used with accuracy and precision. Nothing but this careful attention to the import of words can impart precision to language, and render the meaning of sentences certain and unmistakeable.

In addition to accuracy and clearness, our words ought to be selected so as to be suitable to the subject discussed. When treating of Divine truth, and enforcing gospel privilege, all low, vulgar, and slang terms and phrases should be most studiously avoided. Nor let it be supposed, that this is to drive us into the other extreme of affectation and grandiloquence. Nothing of the kind! Dignified simplicity is the manner in which the great subjects which engage our attention ought to be discussed. In this respect, the discourses of our Saviour form a beautiful model for our imitation.

Further, it may be added, that our words should be so arranged as to give strength and earnestness to the discourse. I do not mean now to exhort you to earnestness and zeal, although this state of mind is necessary to imbue our communications with the qualities of which I am speaking; but to adopt a course which will prevent your earnest and zealous spirits from being crippled and cramped for want of means to convey this allowable warmth to your hearers. In illustration



of this point, I will give you an extract from the last sermon of an eminently useful minister, the late Rev. David Stoner. Discoursing on the repentance of the Ninevites, he said: "If any inquire, why we so often return with the same topics in our mouths; here they meet with an answer: It is because we have not such hearers as Jonah had; it is because you delay your repentance. We preach the necessity of repentance, the danger of the sinner, the nearness of death, the torments of eternal death, because there is need of it. If you will all repent, then, like Jonah we can comparatively lay such topics aside: but, until that time, these things we do preach, these things we must preach, these things we will preach, and these things we dare not do otherwise than preach. Cease to sin, and we will cease to tell you that Satan is your master, that hell is your home, and eternal torment your portion. But if you will delay, while our 'three days' journey' is continued we must exclaim, 'Yet a few moments, and you will be entirely overthrown! Yet a few moments, and devils will be your tormentors! Yet a few moments, and you will be enveloped in the curling, sulphureous flames of hell! Yet a few moments, and your leaky, shattered bark will be launched into the stormy ocean of eternity! Hurricanes of fire and brimstone shall sweep across the infernal deep; and every blast shall howl ETERNITY! Every demon you meet will shriek, ETERNITY! A monster shall gnaw your vitals, a monster with ten thousand tongues, and every tongue shall hiss ETERNITY! Upon the gates of hell shall be written, in flaming characters, 'TO BE OPENED NO MORE THROUGH ETERNITY!' And will you delay your salvation any longer? Perhaps the thirty-ninth day is passing; nay, perhaps you have entered upon the fortieth. Death is whetting his scythe; nay, perhaps his dart is now entering your body! And are you still impenitent? O, like the Ninevites, delay no longer!"

Does any one believe that these words spontaneously arranged themselves in these positions, and that these sentences were formed without any previous preparation or premeditation? We fully recognise the presence of Divine assistance, and the strong excitement of that solemn occasion: yet, making every allowance for these influences, after carefully reading this discourse, we are fully prepared to receive the statement of Mr. Stoner's biographer, that "on the *preparation* of his sermons he bestowed much care."

It is not intended here to offer any opinion on the manner or style of Mr. Stoner's preaching; but the passage which we

have cited is referred to for the purpose of showing the tremendous power which can be brought into operation by the skilful arrangement of a few words. You will perceive, as you pass your eye over the sentences contained in this extract, that no uncommon words are employed. There is not here a single term capable of diverting the mind from the subject, or calling for inquiry as to its meaning. Every word is so well known, that any child can understand it. It is manifest, however, from a careful inspection of the passage, that its uncommon power is principally the result of arrangement. Naturally as the words seem to flow, it is very possible to place them in such a connexion as would deprive them of their present peculiar force. The judicious repetition of the same words, "Yet a few moments," and "Eternity," gives immense force to the address. The vivid manner in which figures and impersonation are introduced, brings the abyss of misery before the mind, instinct with life, and fraught with boundless tormenting power.

Special attention is called to these points, because, in the best sense of the terms, we speak for effect. It is not the delivery of a logical discourse, or of a smooth and elegant essay, that will satisfy the conscience of a right-minded preacher. The question, the great question, is, What effect has the sermon had on the souls of the congregation? And it is beyond all question, that this is affected by the choice of words and the manner of their delivery. The preacher who neglects this mighty power, and trusts entirely to chance, who has but a slight acquaintance with his native language and its wonderful resources, is like the soldier who assails his foes with a pop-gun whilst a Minie rifle lies unemployed at his feet.

The most remarkable testimony given to the teaching of the Saviour was, "He spake as never man spake." And shall those whom he has called to proclaim his truth to the world, be careless how they speak? No, my brethren! Let us study to be workmen that need not be ashamed. The momentous interests affected by our course of duty demand it at our hands. We live in a rapidly-advancing age. Educational influences are operating on every side. We must prepare to sustain our position with increasing vigour and effect. The world will never outgrow its need of the gospel, nor, I am bold to say, its want of local preachers. But, in order to do justice to our call and our cause, we must be prepared to communicate our message with propriety and force. The glorious truth which we proclaim must not be exposed to contempt, by an

ignorant or careless mode of delivery. We are told, that the Book of Mormon, the basis on which has been reared one of the greatest heresies and barefaced fallacies of this or any other age, contains the following sentences, and numbers similar in their ungrammatical and inaccurate construction:—"O ye wicked *ones!* hide *thee* in the dust." "I should have *wore* these bands." "Why persecuteth *thou* the church?" "He has *fell*." "The promises *hath* been." "All things which *is* expedient." Language like this may do to propagate error, which finds an appropriate lodgment in the rude and hardened mind that "does not like to retain God in its knowledge;" but we must not so preach Christ.

If I may add another word on the subject, it is this:—Use words with which you are familiar; and, whilst avoiding all low and vulgar terms, deliver your addresses from the pulpit in the same words you generally use, and which are understood without an effort by all around you. These, arranged properly by an instructed and disciplined mind, will enable you with simplicity and power to make known the word of life to perishing men.



## LECTURE XIII.

### BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATION.

**NATURE of Criticism**—Limited Sense of the Term as applied to Biblical Science—Spirit in which the Inquiry should be conducted—The Course which has been adopted to ascertain the precise State of the Text of Scripture, and to amend it when faulty—The Samaritan Pentateuch—Its History, Character, and Importance—The Greek Versions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus—Other Versions, the Targums, Peshito, &c.—Probability of Error in the sacred Text—The Certainty of Error established—Grand Plan for ascertaining the Extent of Error projected, carried out by Kennicott and De Rossi—Several hundred thousand various Readings discovered—But Nothing found to shake any Fact, Doctrine, or Precept of Divine Truth—Wonderful providential Preservation of the Bible—Hebrew Care of the Scriptures until the Time of Christ—Efforts afterward made to corrupt them—Evidence of this—Prevented by the Septuagint—Valuable Aid supplied by the Samaritan Version—Vast Extent of Labour and Learning employed in this Work—Its glorious Result—**THE NEW TESTAMENT**—Causes of Error—Early critical Efforts—Multiplied Causes of Deterioration—Measures of Jerome and Euthalius—The Causes of the numerous Various Readings—Yet, notwithstanding their vast Number, the Text is restored to a State of marvellous Purity—The Divine Wisdom and Goodness gloriously displayed in the wonderful Preservation of the Scriptures—**BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION**—The Nature and Importance of this Study—The necessary Qualifications, moral, intellectual, literary—Integrity of the English Version—Learning necessary to understand it—Office of Reason in Biblical Interpretation—Its Relation to Spiritual Illumination—The Bible to be explained as any other Book, except in Respect of those Peculiarities in which it cannot be compared to any other Book—Instances of such Exception in the prophetic Scriptures—Various Modes of scriptural Interpretation—The allegorical—The Accommodation System—The rationalistic—The ecclesiastical or dogmatic—The true and proper Mode, grammatical and historical—Figurative and tropical Language, Rules for detecting and explaining—The great Law of scriptural Interpretation—Holy Scripture does not contradict itself—This Rule applied and extended by comparing Scripture with Scripture—Application of this Rule—Neglect of this Mode the great Cause of Error and Heresy—Further Directions respecting figurative Language—The Poetry of Scripture, its several Kinds, Resources, and Advantages—Symbolical Language of Scripture, its Nature and Importance—Scriptural Types defined and explained—Conclusion.

My dear brethren, we are now arrived at that point in our investigations which enables us to direct our immediate attention to the means of ascertaining the true intent and meaning

of those sacred records, which contain the gospel of our salvation, and give us our message of mercy to perishing men.

It is possible, however, that the word which I have placed first as describing my object and design in this Lecture may, to some extent, prejudice many of my readers against its scope and contents. Perhaps, with plain pious people generally, there are no words in common use, which are taken to convey a more objectionable sense than "critic, critical, criticism." And unquestionably a never-failing torrent of affectation, pedantry, conceit, ill-nature, and harsh judgment is poured on the world under cover of these terms. But we should never allow ourselves to be scared away from the proper use of a word, by any abuse of it. The term "critic" comes from a Greek root which signifies "to judge, to separate, to distinguish:" the word therefore means "a judge, or discerner." Now, should not every man who goes forth to preach the word of God to his perishing fellow do it in this character? Must he not judge and discern the true import of holy scripture, and apply it in his teaching accordingly? Why, then, should not biblical criticism engage our attention as a subject of deep and vital interest?

But we must not overlook the fact, that these terms, "biblical criticism," have been for some time invested with a kind of conventional sense, rather different from the strict and original import of the words. By this phrase now, we do not speak of that discernment which elicits the precise meaning of a portion of scripture; but rather those rules by which the genuineness or purity of the text is decided, and by which it is restored where it may have been corrupted. On the other hand, "biblical interpretation" treats of the means by which the real sense of the text is to be educed and exhibited.

On biblical criticism, taken in this limited and technical sense, we shall not dwell at length. A knowledge of the original languages in which the books of holy scripture were written, is essential to a full comprehension of this part of biblical science; and our pages are not designed for persons who possess such learning. We should not, however, pass it over altogether, as a mere English student may acquire important information respecting holy scripture from a brief discussion of some of the elements of this important branch of biblical learning. This is, indeed, the foundation of all scriptural investigation; for, before we labour to ascertain the meaning of holy scripture, it is obviously necessary that we satisfy ourselves that we have the exact words of the sacred writers before us.

I may here caution you as to the moral qualifications neces-

sary for this branch of study. In doing this, I shall not follow the example of those who would throw around every part of scripture a degree of sacredness which forbids investigation and repels inquiry. It seems sufficiently evident that we must pursue precisely the same course of inquiry to establish the purity of the text of the inspired volume, which we would take in respect of any other ancient book. We must test the fidelity of the present Mosaic text as we would that of Herodotus; must take the same course to satisfy ourselves that we have the exact words of the epistles of Paul, that we would use to produce the same effect on our mind in regard of the epistles of Pliny. It does not follow, however, that the person who can adequately conduct the latter of these inquiries is certainly in that state of mind which will enable him successfully to carry out the former. This word is the word of God. It has come down to us, indeed, through many centuries, has passed through the hands of men, wicked, ignorant, designing, careless, and may therefore have, in some measure, been changed in the course of transmission. Some words may have been omitted by errors of transcribers, others may have been mistaken; interpolations and additions may have been made. But still the subject matter of the Bible is the result of plenary Divine inspiration, and should be approached, and can only be profitably approached, with sacred awe and deep seriousness of spirit. Some time since it was deemed little better than profaneness to suppose the possibility of any error or corruption in the sacred text: we have reason to be thankful that we live in a brighter day of biblical science. Our fathers clung to the idea of an immaculate text with such intense tenacity, as almost to shut out inquiry, and to leave them to the consolations, in this respect, of a blind and naked faith. In our time we are in a much more satisfactory position. The most severe tests ever proposed to ascertain literary integrity, have been applied to the Bible. Versions have been collated; all sorts of ancient manuscripts have been ransacked; various readings have been diligently sought out. And what has been the result? The full and perfect authentication of the Bible as the uncorrupted and inspired word of revealed truth. It will be our endeavour to afford a sketch of the manner in which this has been done.

If an intelligent person wished to ascertain whether any modern copy of an ancient work was seriously corrupted, or faithfully represented the sense of its original, there are three sources of information to which he would naturally apply. He would, in the first place, procure and examine the earliest



extant copies of such a work in the language in which it was originally written. He would, secondly, inquire whether it had in ancient times been translated into any other language or languages; and if so, compare these with the oldest copies of the original text. Lastly, he would carefully investigate the literature of the period nearest to the time of the publication of the work, and ascertain whether it had been quoted, or extracts from it made; and if so, these would also be compared with the originals, and with the translations; and in case discrepancies between these were detected, the utmost learning, tact, and judgment would be employed to discover which was the original and true reading; and the text would be corrected or amended accordingly.

This is exactly what has been done in respect of the Bible. The most ancient copies of holy scripture in the original languages have been carefully examined. It need scarcely be said, that in no instance has the really original manuscript been preserved to our times. There are perhaps no copies at present in existence more than one thousand years old: these, however, have been most industriously sought out, and very carefully examined. The oldest existing *ms.* of the Hebrew scriptures whose date is known, was written *A.D.* 1106. Others, indeed, are supposed to be older; but their age rests on conjecture.

Of the versions or translations of Old-Testament books, we must first mention the Samaritan; although, properly speaking, this is not a translation or version, but an edition of a part of the sacred scriptures. It is confined to the Pentateuch, and was found among the people whose name it bears. This version has been the subject of much disputation among the learned, which seems to have arisen from the attempt by one party to magnify its merits, and by another to depreciate them. Fairly considered, the case does not seem to present any serious difficulty. The Samaritans were a mongrel people, arising out of inter-marriages between the remains of the ten tribes of Israel, and those Gentiles which the kings of Assyria sent to occupy that territory after the deportation of the Hebrew inhabitants.

The Hebrew tribes which inhabited this country were an undivided portion of the great Hebrew family until the time of Rehoboam, when they seceded, and formed a separate kingdom under Jeroboam. At that period copies of the Pentateuch were common to all the Hebrews, and, of course, the people of the ten tribes would have them in their possession as well as the descendants of Judah and Benjamin. Whether the Books

of Joshua and Judges were equally public, is doubtful ; probably some copies of the former were in circulation. But the schism, political and religious, introduced by Jeroboam would necessarily prevent the writings of David, Solomon, and the prophets from being known to this people. They therefore professed to receive only the Pentateuch as of inspired authority ; and this they regarded with intense veneration.

Their successors, the Samaritans, accordingly preserved this sacred volume, written in the ancient Hebrew character, as their greatest treasure. They also had very imperfect copies of Joshua and Judges ; but to these not much importance appears to have been attached. The Samaritan version of the Pentateuch was known in the early part of the Christian era, but was afterward lost sight of, and for a thousand years no copy could be obtained. This led the learned to question whether it had ever existed. At length, however, by the good providence of God, just at the time when biblical learning was beginning to revive in Europe, in the early part of the seventeenth century, archbishop Usher succeeded in obtaining a copy from the East ; others were soon after procured ; so that when Kennicott prosecuted his revision of the Hebrew text, he had sixteen of these manuscripts.

It may here be observed, that the Samaritan Pentateuch is by no means regarded as an important means of correcting the Hebrew text generally, it having been evidently transcribed with less care than our Hebrew copies, and frequently exhibits proofs of unwarrantable liberty having been taken with the sacred word. Yet, with all these imperfections, it is valuable, as it contains some sentences which were certainly a part of the inspired record, but which have disappeared from the present Hebrew Bible.

The oldest version of the Old-Testament scriptures is the translation of them into Greek, which is called the Septuagint. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the importance of this work. For, although it is a translation, and therefore necessarily of less weight than its original ; and notwithstanding that the copies which have come down to us are, on the whole, far less accurate than the Hebrew ; it was undoubtedly made more than two hundred and fifty years before Christ, and was recognised and approved by the Hebrew people generally, as a correct rendering of the Old Testament into the Greek language. It was, therefore, circulated as a faithful translation while the Hebrews yet remained the church of God, and before any of those exciting questions arose which respected the rejec-

tion of Christ, and the excision of the Jewish people; and, further, it was circulated so extensively that no sect or party, whatever might be their wishes, could vitiate a passage in any considerable number of copies.

There are other Greek versions of the Old Testament, which were made after the Christian era, and which are of considerable value to the biblical critic. Aquila translated the Hebrew scriptures into Greek in the second century. The occasion of this, and of other translations effected about the same period, is supposed to have been a wish to give a version of the Hebrew scriptures less favourable to the Christians in their controversy with the Jews, than the Septuagint. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the study of the Hebrew language rapidly declined: the contest between the Jews and the Christians could, therefore, only be made generally intelligible by reference to a Greek version of the Old-Testament books. Aquila, a Jewish proselyte, made the first of these efforts, and his version was remarkable for its undeviating *literality*. He seems to have studied most anxiously to transfer the sense of every Hebrew word into the language in which he wrote. This translation is generally regarded as a faithful transcript of the original. It was so much esteemed by the Jews, that they called it the "Hebrew verity." Theodotion, a native of Ephesus, who lived at the same time with Aquila, also rendered the Hebrew scriptures into Greek; which was less literal than that of Aquila, and is generally esteemed as being little more than a careful revision of the Septuagint. The third post-Christian Greek version was made by Symmachus, who seems to have written about the close of the second century. This translation is concise, but more free and paraphrastic even than that of Theodotion, but is supposed, in general, to have given the sense of the Hebrew original with fidelity. Unfortunately, no complete copy of these translations at present remains. Large fragments of them are found in the remains of Origen's Hexapla, enough to reveal the character of the works, and to be of important service to biblical criticism, although but a small portion of the whole has been preserved.

Besides these, there are numerous ancient versions of various relative merit, but all useful to persons engaged in critical inquiries into the exact text of holy scripture. The first of these which I shall notice are the Targums. The word "Targum" signifies in general any version of explanation. The Targums were written after the biblical Hebrew had ceased to be the vernacular language of the Jews. The object contem-



plated in their production was, to give the sense of scripture in a form accessible to the people generally. They were accordingly written in the Chaldee dialect, with which the Jews were familiar from the time of the captivity. They are called "paraphrases," as they were comments or explanations, rather than literal translations. At present we know of eleven Targums, the first three of which are on the five books of Moses :—The Targum of Onkelos (who is supposed to have been a disciple of Hillel, the grandfather of Gamaliel, Paul's instructor) ; of Jonathan ; that of Jerusalem ; of Jonathan ben Uzziel on the prophets ; of Joseph the blind on Job, the Psalms, and Proverbs ; a Targum on the Books of Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations of Jeremiah ; a Targum on the First and Second Books of Chronicles ; three on Esther ; and, lastly, the Jerusalem Targum on the prophets. There is, beside these, the Peshito, or old Syriac version. The term "Peshito" implies a profession that it is a *faithful* version of the scriptures. The first writer known to refer to this is Ephrem Syrus, who died A.D. 376. There are several ancient Arabic versions ; but it is supposed none earlier than the seventh or eighth century. Early in the Christian era, it is believed that the scriptures were translated into Latin. Jerome, A.D. 382, dissatisfied with any Latin versions then existing, made one himself, which was greatly esteemed, and which afterward, revised by Alcuin, formed the Vulgate.

Another means of testing the purity of the text arises from the numerous quotations and parallel passages found in the Old Testament, and in the quotations of Old-Testament scriptures in the New Testament. A comparison of these respectively affords important information respecting the change which has taken place in several portions of holy writ.

In a preceding lecture it was proved that the scriptures were delivered under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that the present books of the Bible are the genuine and authentic books which were so inspired. But it is easy to conceive that all this may be true, and that, notwithstanding, by constant copying, and the frequent changes of the character in which the scriptures have been written, and the successive variations of language which have obtained, the books, as we have them now, may be very different from the originals as they came from their inspired authors. This is a most important point, and deserves the serious attention of intelligent Christians, and especially of those who teach religious truth, inasmuch as it affects the very basis of our religion, the foundation of Divine

truth. In the discussion of this subject, learned writers have, in our judgment, placed undue reliance on the scrupulous care which the Hebrews manifested in regard to the sacred text. We are assured of nothing more fully, than that much discrimination is necessary to a proper acquaintance with this subject; and that this will show, in a most remarkable manner, the watchful care of a gracious Providence over the precious records of Divine truth.

There can be no doubt that the most scrupulous and anxious care was evinced by the ancient Jews in the transcription of their sacred writings. The insertion of a single letter too much, or the omission of a letter, would vitiate a whole manuscript, and cause it to be forthwith destroyed. Yet, notwithstanding this excessive care, it is now generally admitted, that the text of holy scripture has not come down to us totally free from error. This fact was, indeed, long and obstinately resisted: but it is now patent to the world. The transcribers of the sacred books did sometimes use one letter instead of another, transpose letters, omit them, and occasionally even extend the same kind of errors to words and sentences. It may be proper to observe that, among the ancient Jews, common usages were calculated, notwithstanding the excessive care employed, to lead to some of these errors. Abbreviations were frequently employed by these scribes, which not unfrequently led to mistake; sometimes two words were read as one, or one divided into two, errors which, from the ancient mode of writing Hebrew, were very likely to occur. Again: the Hebrew transcribers never left a line unfinished, nor divided a word at the end of a line: so that, if at the end of a line there was a space left, and not room for the next word, the space would be filled out with letters, probably the letters beginning the next word; but the following line would, notwithstanding, often begin with the word from the beginning; while, probably, the next transcriber would incorporate these redundant letters, in the middle of a line. Lastly, it was not an unusual practice for scribes to add an explanatory word or phrase in the margin; and these by ignorant transcribers were sometimes regarded as omissions, and inserted into the text.

With all these pregnant causes of error in operation, we need not wonder at the prevalence of what are called "various readings," or different renderings of the same passage in different manuscripts. In those circumstances, the only course which seemed likely to prove the perfect purity of the received text, or to rectify it where erroneous, was to make a careful and

extensive collation of ancient manuscripts, to compare their differences and relative authority, and thus to ascertain as clearly as possible what was the original text of the sacred writers.

This work was attempted by several critics; but its accomplishment on a large scale was reserved for Dr. Kennicott; who, after devoting many years to the laborious investigation, completed his comparison of six hundred and fifteen mss. and fifty-two editions of the scriptures and the Talmuds, and published the various readings which he had thus discovered. From this collation De Rossi collected the most important readings, and further extended his inquiries to seven hundred and thirty-one other mss., and three hundred editions, and fully examined the ancient versions, books, and even mss. of the rabbins. The result of this extended course of research was the discovery of several hundred thousand various readings of passages of holy scripture. And yet, in all these, nothing has been discovered to affect any doctrine or precept of revealed truth. The learned in the Christian church have not, therefore, shut out the action of the utmost scrutiny from the sacred records; they have taken more pains to verify the text of scripture, than has been exercised on any other ancient work; and the result has been an ample demonstration of the providential preservation of the Bible as the grand revelation of Divine truth to mankind.

Referring to a remark previously made, respecting an undue confidence in the religious scrupulosity of the Hebrews in their great care of their sacred books, it is here necessary to observe, that our remark does not apply to the time prior to the promulgation of the gospel. In all that has been said on this subject, down to that period, we fully concur. When, however, the gospel was preached, and the Christians showed by the clearest Old-Testament proofs the Deity and atonement of Jesus Christ, we think that the bigotry of the Hebrews exceeded even their reverence for their scriptures, and that, if possible, they would have falsified their sacred records to demolish the great foundations of the Christian faith. I will, as briefly as possible, show the evidence which supports this opinion.

Let it, then, be stated, that, whatever deep and sacred reverence for their holy books pervaded the Hebrew mind before the resurrection of Christ, this was afterward virtually subordinated to their views of the Divine honour, and their apprehensions of the requirements of their religious system. The Babylonish Talmud positively asserts, "that it is right and



lawful to take away one letter from the law, that the name of God may be publicly sanctified, or may not be publicly profaned." Indeed, the religious reception of unauthorised traditions as rules of faith had wrought in the Hebrews that mischievous change which it always produces: cleaving to the inventions of men, they soon learned slightly to esteem the word of God: hence it was their maxim, "The *Mikdash*" (or Old Testament) "is like water; the *Mishna*, like wine; and the *Gemara*," (more plain and perfect,) "like hypocras," or the richest wine. I know many writers have denied, and but few, and they with great reluctance, have admitted this, under an impression that it takes away one of our strongest guarantees for the integrity of the Old-Testament text,—Hebrew fidelity. But this is a mistake. We have the fullest assurance of this fidelity, when it was absolutely required; namely, when the Old-Testament records were entirely in the hands of the Hebrew church. Throughout all that period, nothing can exceed the pious care with which the sacred text was guarded; and it is a fact worthy the utmost attention, that during this time the Septuagint translation was made and generally circulated: so that, when the Hebrews had fallen away from their zeal for the truth, had consummated their fall by the rejection of the Messiah, and were in consequence rejected by the Lord, and were no longer his church and chosen people, and in this condition were even prepared to vitiate the sacred books in order to justify their obstinate rejection of the Messiah; their power to do so with any hope of success was removed by the prevalence of copies of the Septuagint. This version was in the hands of Christ and his apostles; from it they almost always quoted: it was, indeed, the copy of the Old Testament ordinarily in use in Judea when the gospel was promulged; and as it had been formally approved by the Hebrew rulers as an exact translation, it remained an invincible witness against any fraudulent tampering with the Hebrew scriptures, which, remaining almost exclusively with the Jewish rulers, might otherwise have been seriously corrupted.

That such a fraud was attempted, is asserted by the best-informed of the early Christian fathers; and, among them, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, (who was undoubtedly the best biblical scholar of his day,) and Eusebius. We think evidence of these fraudulent efforts yet remains in the sacred text. We will refer to two or three instances; but, before doing so, must observe, that when a portion of Old-Testament scripture is quoted by an inspired writer of the New

Testament, we are undoubtedly bound to regard such a quotation as giving a correct sense of the passage. What views can we entertain of the inspiration of these writers, if we suppose them to have misquoted Old-Testament scriptures, and to have made such erroneous quotations the basis of their inspired teaching and argument?

We direct attention to a quotation found in Acts xv. 16, 17, from Amos ix. 11, 12: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." Yet, if we turn to the text of Amos, as found in our Bibles, which is a translation from the Hebrew, we find the passage run thus: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the Heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this." On examination, it will be seen that the first verse in each is identical in sense; but the second in the one case promises the admission of the Gentiles to gospel blessings, whilst the other predicts the subjection of Edom and all the Heathen to the Hebrews. Which was the correct and original sense, there cannot be a moment's doubt; for the passage was quoted by James to prove the right of Gentiles to gospel blessings, without subjection even to Mosaic ordinances; and his hearers, fully acquainted with the Hebrew scriptures, even in defiance of their prejudices, admitted its force, and submitted to a corresponding decision. This, in itself, considering the plenary inspiration under which the apostles acted, would be quite sufficient to show that the original Hebrew has in this case been altered to sustain Jewish prejudice. But this conclusion is rendered inevitable by the fact, that the Greek text of the passage in the Acts, is word for word the same as the Septuagint version of the text in Amos; which proves that when the Greek translation was made, B.C. 280, the Hebrew of Amos had the same reading as that quoted by the apostle: but it has been since altered so as to give a totally different sense. But the effort is vain, as the true meaning of the Spirit is preserved in the Septuagint, and given by the apostle.

We have another instance in Heb. x. 5, where Paul, quoting Psalm xl. 6—8, says, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but

a body hast thou prepared me." When this had been fulfilled in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the prophetic testimony was too clear for endurance by Jewish unbelief; and, consequently, the passage was altered so as to read, "Mine ears hast thou opened," instead of, "A body hast thou prepared me." That the words used by the apostle give the sense of the prophetic Psalmist, is proved by the fact, that the Septuagint rendering is identically the same.

The important text, Deut. xxxii. 43, is quoted by Paul in two separate places. In Rom. xv. 10, we find the words, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people;" and in Heb. i. 6, we read, "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." The exact rendering of the present Hebrew gives, "Praise, ye Gentiles, his people:" thus showing that the sense of this clause is corrupted, whilst that quoted in the Hebrews is expunged altogether. The Septuagint still reads the passage in its undoubted original sense, "Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and let all the angels of God worship him; rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people."

We might refer to a few other passages, which afford similar evidence of intentional alteration; but satisfy ourselves with referring to the chronological numbers in the Book of Genesis. There was a strong and general opinion among the ancient Jews, that the world would continue seven thousand years, and that the Messiah would be manifested in the sixth thousand of those years. Whatever might have been the foundation of this notion, as respects the coming of Christ it was correct; for he appeared about the middle of the sixth millenary of the world's existence, and thus confirmed the popular expectation of the Hebrews. A learned author of the thirteenth century clearly states the conduct which this circumstance induced the Jews to adopt. "The Jews, believing it to be foretold in the law and the prophets, that Christ was to be sent in the last time, in order for a pretence to reject him they altered the epoch of the world, which in scripture is computed by the ages of men, and subtracted from Adam's age when he begat Seth an hundred years, and added them to the remainder of his life. And they did the same in the lives of most of his posterity to Abraham; and thus it appeared by their computation that Christ was manifested in the fifth millenary, (just begun,) near to the middle of the ages of the world, which were to be seven thousand, according to their tradition and interpretation of scripture; and therefore said they, 'We are yet in the middle



of the time of the world, and the appointed time for the appearance of the Messiah is not yet come.' But the computation of the Septuagint showed that Christ came in the sixth millenary of the world, at which time he was to come." We have no doubt that this is the true reason of the great difference in the chronology of this period as shown in the tables given on page 83; and it explains the reason why, as there stated, we prefer the numbers of the Septuagint. Indeed, a remarkable proof that this difference is the result of Jewish corruption is found in the fact, that, while the Jewish school of Tiberias allowed the correct number of the years of Jared before the birth of his son Enoch to remain, the Jewish school of Babylon, determined to reduce to the utmost every epoch, expunged the hundred years here also, and thus made the time from the creation to the deluge to be but 1556 years.

It is to be regretted that eminent scholars have so frequently persisted in overlooking the overwhelming evidence which establishes the preceding conclusions, by confounding together the seasons of Hebrew fidelity and apostasy. It is, however, a fact undeniably established, as Dr. Adam Clarke has so forcibly expressed it, that the Septuagint "revision preserves many important words, some sentences, and several whole verses, which originally made a part of the Hebrew text, but have long ago entirely disappeared." It was the same spirit which formerly shut out all investigation from the sacred text, by the cry of the Hebrew verity. The undoubted propriety of correcting the Hebrew by the Septuagint has been objected to by other critics, because of the superior general accuracy of the former. This is fully admitted. The Hebrew text has certainly been more carefully guarded, and is in a far better state of preservation than the Greek: but surely this should not deter us from using the latter, and accepting its aid in those few cases in which it has, by the good providence of God, preserved the sacred text from mutilation by either accident or inveterate fanaticism.

The same, to a certain extent, may be said of the Samaritan. For a considerable time after this version was restored to the knowledge of biblical critics, a violent controversy was maintained respecting its critical authority as a means of revising the Hebrew text. This may be said to have been settled by Gesenius, who clearly proved that, in a vast number of the cases in which the Samaritan differed from the Hebrew, the cause was error or imperfection in the former version; but this eminent scholar was, nevertheless, obliged to admit that it did

contain some passages more fully and perfectly than even the Hebrew.

We will notice two or three of these. The first is Gen. iv. 8. This verse, literally rendered from the Hebrew, would stand thus: "And Cain said to Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field," &c. The violent and abrupt break in the sense of these words is partially, and but partially, covered by our authorised translation, which has: "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field," &c. The Samaritan gives a consistent sense by supplying the words which, by some means, have evidently dropped out of the Hebrew text. Thus: "And Cain said to Abel his brother, *Let us walk out into the field*: and it came to pass, when they were in the field," &c. Here all is easy, natural, and correct.

The Samaritan version also removes an obscurity from Gen. xxii. 13, which, rendered from the Hebrew, reads, "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold *behind him* a ram caught," &c. The Samaritan has, "And looked, and behold a ram caught," &c. Another variation, which at one time was held to be of great chronological consequence, is found in Exod. xii. 40; which, according to the Hebrew, reads, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." This was considered to be inaccurate, because the Israelites did not dwell in Egypt four hundred and thirty years; and, consequently, the Samaritan reading was held to be the strict and proper rendering, because it says, "The sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers who dwelt in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." More careful inquiry, however, has tended to establish the credit of the Hebrew as the correct text. It does not say, as at first it seems to do, that the Israelites sojourned in Egypt four hundred and thirty years, but that this was the period of their sojourning. The words, "who dwelt in Egypt," are not at all essential to the sense, and seem to have been used simply to point out and identify the persons who are spoken of. It is probable, therefore, that the words added in the Samaritan were at first an explanatory gloss placed in the margin, and afterwards accidentally added to the text.

Nothing, indeed, can be more interesting or edifying than a careful review of the nature, extent, and results of these researches. Every ancient language has been studied; every ms. and version that could be discovered has been carefully

examined; a boundless succession of talent and erudition has been diligently and skilfully occupied, for generations, in the examination of the sacred text. Nothing has been taken for granted; every part has been explored; men of different nations, principles, and creeds have joined in this labour. And what has been the result? Certainly not a proof that the work was uncalled for, and the inquiry unsuitably prosecuted. No; a multitude of various readings have been discovered, some errors have been corrected, a few instances of fraud have been detected; but the grand result is, that whilst every other work, written from the days of Moses to Malachi, has perished, or remains only in few and uncertain fragments, we have the whole of the Old-Testament books in all their purity and integrity; a glorious monument of the gracious care of that God who inspired them for the instruction of the world. The Hebrew being found the most perfect depository of this Divine truth, whilst the Samaritan and Septuagint afford ample means for correcting the few imperfections of that venerable text; in no instance has any great truth been imperilled, or any doctrine been affected, by the multitudinous transcriptions of the sacred books through so many ages.

We have now to direct similar attention to the books of the New Testament. We need scarcely observe that we have in no instance the original copy of any of these scriptures. The actual writings of the evangelists and apostles have long since perished. We do not even know the materials on which they wrote. The books we have are handed down to our day by repeated transcription. We have already noticed the manner in which the writings of the evangelists and apostles were collected and preserved; and the unquestionable fact that at the end of the second century they were recognised by the Christian church as "the word of God." \*

No lengthened period elapsed before the New-Testament text attracted critical attention. About the middle of the third century Hesychius and Lucian undertook to examine and correct any errors that might have crept into the mss. of these sacred books. Their tact and ability have not been very highly esteemed: there was, however, much scope for their efforts. The writings of the evangelists and apostles had been comparatively a short time in existence, and had been received only by a very small section of the population. Yet, notwithstanding this, numerous variations of expression had been introduced, which rendered careful and intelligent revision very necessary.

\* See Lecture ii. page 43.



Afterwards other causes operated. The demand for the New-Testament writings increased with the rapid propagation of the gospel ; and from this period to the end of the fifteenth century this demand had to be supplied by manual transcription. Soon after the invention of printing, the attention of the learned in the Christian world was directed to this subject, and ultimately accomplished almost all that can be desired.

In order to give an idea of the success with which the efforts of learned men have been employed in securing the purity of the New-Testament text, it will be necessary to afford some information respecting the manner in which the copies of these scriptures were made, and the causes of error which were in operation during the long period from the middle of the third to the beginning of the sixteenth century.

It may be scarcely possible for us, familiar as we are with all the perfect appliances of modern typography, to form any adequate idea of the difficulties and hazards of perpetuating copies of ancient writings, according to the modes then in use, without alteration and corruption. It is almost unnecessary to say, that in those days chapters and verses were unknown. But the reader may not be aware, that the words were not separated one from another, nor distinguished in their beginnings or endings by any alteration of letter or by any mark or sign. The character used in all the oldest mss., indeed in all until the time of Jerome, (A.D. 420,) is the large letter called capitals, and commonly spoken of as *uncial* or initial letters. These were placed side by side until a line was formed quite across the ms. ; and every such line had the appearance of one word. No respect was paid to the division of words, each line was filled out : if the first letter of a new word was sufficient to complete a line, it was placed there, whether vowel or consonant, and the next line began with the following letter of the word. This, of course, made reading very difficult except to a very practised eye. The difficulty, however, was increased by the use of numerous abbreviations : the words representing *Lord, Jesus, Christ*, although containing in Greek six or more letters, would be read in the mss. by two only, the first and the last ; and then it sometimes happened that words essentially different would have the same initial and final letters, and thus be mistaken the one for another. Impressed with a desire to remove these inconveniences, Jerome, early in the fifth century, appears to have introduced the comma and the colon, and they were then inserted in many more ancient mss. About a half century afterwards Euthalius, at that time a deacon of

Alexandria, published an edition of the Gospels, in which he divided the text into lines, which were regulated as to length by the sense they conveyed. He afterward, when bishop of Sulca in Egypt, completed the whole of the New Testament in the same manner. The following has been given as an example from the English version :—

THAT THE AGED MEN BE SOBER  
GRAVE  
TEMPERATE  
SOUND IN FAITH  
IN LOVE  
THE AGED WOMEN LIKEWISE  
IN BEHAVIOUR AS BECOMETH HOLINESS  
NOT FALSE ACCUSERS  
NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE  
TEACHERS OF GOOD THINGS

This measure assisted very materially in defining the sense of these sacred writings ; for when this mode of writing was not followed, a point was generally placed where an Euthalian line should end ; so that, virtually, the same advantage was obtained. From the time of Jerome, indeed, the process of improved punctuation continued, until it was perfected soon after the discovery of printing.

When, however, sound learning was effectually applied to the correction of the sacred text after the invention of printing, the discrepancies in different copies of the New Testament were found to be very numerous. These differences between the mss. were technically called “ various readings.” And in order to understand what is stated in works which refer to this subject, it is necessary that we have some knowledge of the causes which led to those numerous errors. The following, then, may be regarded as the chief of the causes of this extensive error :—

1. Imperfection in the original manuscripts.
2. The accidental mistakes of transcribers.
3. The assumption of marginal notes into the text.
4. Designed alterations of a literary kind.
5. Wilful corruption for party purposes.

We will notice the operation of these in order.

Nothing can be more clear than that the imperfection of an original ms. would have this effect. Supposing it at first to have been perfect, the process of time, or the infliction of an

accidental injury, might render any word or letter illegible; and in case there was no other ms. at hand, a copyist would supply this word or letter to the best of his judgment, or omit it, and, of course, frequently make mistakes, and so would often send forth an erroneous copy; which would in due time, by transcription, still further multiply erroneous readings of the passages so affected.

The second kind of errors arose from several causes. Some transcribers wrote from hearing another read to them; and any mistake in pronunciation by the reader, or misapprehension of a word by the hearer, would lead to an error. Others transcribed from sight, and would then mistake one word or letter for another very much like it: several mistakes of this kind have been found. One or more words might by the same cause be transposed, or altogether omitted. Or a word might be divided into two, or two words be mistaken for one. The latter cause, it is believed, operated extensively in respect of the Greek scriptures. The words in this language are very frequently compounded. And as no distinction was made between the words, the transcriber would only have to judge from the context whether the letters before him made one word or more. The abbreviations, so common at this time, were also a prolific source of error. Numerous instances of this kind occur. In respect of Rom. xii. 11, instead of *the Lord*, three mss. have *the time*, giving a very equivocal sense. This error was undoubtedly occasioned by the fact, that the abbreviations for the words *Lord* and *time* in Greek are the same, the words in that language beginning and ending with the same letters. Every one acquainted practically with the transcription of written documents, knows, that, in order to ready copying, it is necessary to take up the matter, not word by word, but several words at a time: but, in doing this, there is a danger lest the correct word should slip from the memory, and a synonymous term be substituted for it. Several instances of this kind have also been found in the New-Testament mss. A worse error than this has been caused by this mode of taking up several words in the mind at the same time; for it has happened that, having done so, on returning to the ms. for another portion, the eye has rested on a word similar to that with which the last phrase closed, although several other words have intervened between them: they have by this means been dropped, and the text thus rendered imperfect. We may quote an instance of this from each of the Testaments. The first is found in Judges xvi. 13, 14, and has rendered the text per-



manently defective. As found in our version the passage runs thus:—"And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web. And she fastened it with the pin, and said." Looking only at these words, the sense is unsatisfactory; for we are surprised to find that Delilah does nothing that she is told to do, and does what, so far as our text goes, she was not told to do. The Septuagint, however, has preserved the whole text, and exposed the nature and extent of the error. That version reads, "And he said to her, If thou shouldest weave the seven locks of my head with the web, and shouldest fasten them with the pin into the wall, then shall I be weak as another man. And it came to pass when he was asleep, that Delilah took the seven locks of his head, and wove them with the web, and fastened them with the pin into the wall, and she said," &c. Here the cause of the omission in our text is evident; the transcriber having written the words "with the web" in the thirteenth verse, on looking again for what was to follow, his eye rested on the same words in the following verse, when, misled by the coincidence, he proceeded to record what followed, and accordingly omitted all the words occurring between the first and second "web." A similar error was made in transcribing Matt. xxvii. 35, when all the words between "casting lots," near the beginning of the verse, and "lots" at the end of it, were omitted in the same way, and are consequently not found in ninety-eight known mss., and are, on that account, rejected by several of our most eminent critics, and are not now generally found in our Greek text. Our translators, however, have with sound judgment inserted them, as they are doubtless an inspired reference to this remarkable fulfilment of prophecy.

The third was a very prolific source of error. In ancient times it was a frequent practice to insert glosses or explanations in the margin. A short solution of a difficult text, the modern name of a place described in the text by its ancient name, or the correction of a supposed error, would frequently be inserted in the margin; and these, some ignorant future copyist would insert in the text.

The fourth cause has not produced extensive effects, although it has given us several various readings; and in this manner—when a writer found what he regarded as an obsolete or inelegant word, he would sometimes supply it with a word more suitable to the sense, and thus make his ms. differ from the original.

The last cause is an alteration for party purposes. There is

no doubt this has often been attempted. Yet, although the feeling which led to this guilty effort may have been the most violent, we have no doubt that it has done less mischief than any other. Copies of the New-Testament records have always been too widely diffused, and watched by all rival sects with too much care, to allow any vitiation of this kind to obtain sufficient currency and credit to establish it as a part of the text.

It will be necessary here briefly to notice the numerous quotations from the Old Testament which are found in the New. Sceptics have cavilled largely at the discrepancies which appear to exist between those passages as they are found in the Old Testament and in the New. All this objection, however, is baseless. A careful and extended comparison of these is equally beyond our limits and our plan; but it would clearly show, that the New-Testament writers have truly given the sense of the original, although in some instances the application of this is qualified by their circumstances and objects. It may, however, be necessary to repeat that, in those cases in which the Hebrew copies and the Septuagint or Samaritan differ from each other, the quotation in the New Testament fully identifies the legitimate text.

The pious student of holy writ will, on perusing this account, naturally ask, "What, then, is the result of all these investigations? Have a very large number of various readings been discovered, and have they produced any obscurity respecting a revealed truth, or placed any doctrine or precept of scripture in a position of doubt or uncertainty?" The answer is, that very many various readings have been discovered: about *two millions* of these have been found and classified, and yet, what is the result of this alarming number of discrepancies? Why, so complete and effective has the critical apparatus been made by the combination of immense talent, learning, and industry, that a competent judge declares, "Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand may be removed, and the original reading be restored with ease," and without a doubt. It would be wrong to say, that there are no words in our New-Testament books at present on which the learned entertain any doubt. But it is a fact, that labour and learning have so succeeded in perfecting the present copies of these scriptures, that in no case is any truth, doctrine, or precept affected by any of the numerous causes of error which have passed under our review. No, in every instance the word of life stands before us as an effective and undoubted chart to

heavenly rest, a full and authorised revelation of the Divine will to the family of man.

I know not how other minds may be affected by a consideration of those numerous operating causes of error, throughout so many centuries; and their marvellous counteraction in the preservation and restoration of the text of the sacred record. But I freely confess I see in it a combination of Divine wisdom and goodness, of the greatest possible magnitude; and a manifestation of these attributes in perfect harmony with the dealings of God with mankind throughout the economy of grace.

What, if the Lord had miraculously watched over every transcription of every part of the sacred record in all ages, so that no error or alteration was made in any copy, just as some of our enthusiastic predecessors seem to have imagined that he had done? Would the result have been more beneficial to the church, or fraught with more glory to God? I think not. Here, although always exposed to error of every kind, actually affected, indeed, by every corrupting influence, the Divine care has so fully protected and preserved the holy book, that it now stands before us, in clear and unsullied purity, as an embodiment of the Divine will, an authoritative and complete standard of faith and morals for the salvation of the world.

We said this was in harmony with the Lord's dealings in the economy of grace. It might better accord with the views of some persons, if God had determined that individuals who obtain saving grace should never lose it, and that thus, by his almighty energy, religion should be maintained in all ages of the world. But he has not done this: the light that he has lit up in his people may become darkness, the salt may lose its savour, and those who have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son may make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, and perish everlastingly. So, in the case before us, learned and good men for a long time struggled to believe and to maintain, that God had, by a special providence, (not to say, miraculously,) preserved the original text of holy scripture in a state of perfect purity, free from all error and corruption. This seemed the way to them most suitable for the truth of God to be preserved and rendered operative to the world's salvation. But to Infinite Wisdom this did not seem the most suitable way. Instead of thus protecting the letter of the word in a miraculous manner, we find it exposed to all the chances of error to which other works have been subject. We find errors and misreadings of every kind, and even a few intentional vitiations of the text.



But have these shaken our confidence, or lessened our faith, in the Bible as the word of God? It has done exactly the reverse. It has led to a thorough and searching investigation into the oldest copies of the sacred books in all countries and languages. All their discrepancies of every kind have been collected, classified, and fully examined; and the gratifying result of all this learned research and laborious investigation has been the fullest possible proof that, for all practical purposes, we have, in our present authorised version, the word of God in all its purity, fulness, and efficiency. Indeed, at the present time, the English student, with the aids within his reach, may, to a great extent, make himself master of those few emendations of the text which the learning of the most devoted scholars has established. But whether he does this or not, he will find every fact, doctrine, law, and promise, clearly and gloriously exhibited in the sacred pages: so that, notwithstanding the multitude of various readings which have been discovered, the limited range of the difference of sense found in them proves an amount of providential care over the transmission of their invaluable records to our day, which should call forth unfeigned thanksgiving to God; and demonstrates that in this, as in all other cases, the way of the Lord is right.

We now direct attention to biblical interpretation. This is another and very important part of biblical science. Having satisfied ourselves that, generally, we have, in our authorised English version, a faithful transcript of the original scriptures, and afforded some means of correcting the few passages which are found to be defective, we proceed to the consideration of the best means for ascertaining the true and proper sense of the sacred text thus placed before us. It is the office of a biblical critic to ascertain precisely what an inspired writer *wrote*, and of the biblical interpreter to determine exactly what he *meant*.

In entering on a discussion of the objects and principles of biblical interpretation, we must endeavour to avoid the opposite extremes of regarding this science as either free from difficulty, or so full of it, as to offer insuperable obstacles to its satisfactory attainment. We must neither underrate nor overrate the arduous nature of this important achievement. In order to have correct ideas on this subject, we should first consider the qualifications necessary to give a correct interpretation of scriptural truth. This work obviously consists of two things: first, to get into his own mind the exact ideas which the Holy

Spirit intended to communicate to mankind by means of the sacred text ; and, secondly, to employ such words in speaking or writing as to be able to raise the same ideas in the minds of others.

When we consider the peculiar character of the sacred records, and the objects for which they were inspired, it need excite no surprise that qualifications adapted to this peculiarity and to those grand objects should be necessary, in order to enable a person thus safely and effectively to ascertain and exhibit the meaning of their contents. At first sight it may appear that the department of biblical criticism requires higher qualities and more profound learning than this. Yet it must be evident to the most superficial observer, that, for all practical purposes, we have here the most vitally important branch of biblical science. All other labours are, indeed, but initiatory. Of what avail is it that the genuineness, authenticity, and authority of holy scripture is fully established, that its text is carefully scrutinized and proved to be uncorrupt, if, after all, its true sense and meaning are not fully apprehended and made known ? It is, indeed, the grand duty of all Christians, and especially of all who aim at being Christian teachers, to become proficient in this art ; but, in order to this, several important requirements are essential—moral, intellectual, and literary.

We will speak first of the necessary moral qualification. The great burden of the Bible is, religious truth : it cannot, for this reason, be studied in a merely intellectual manner. It is a revelation from God to man : to be rightly understood, therefore, it must be received in this character. These sacred records profess to explain the condition of mankind through sin, the danger to which they are exposed, and the salvation which the unbounded love of God has prepared for the world through the incarnation, humiliation, sacrificial death, and atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ : they must, therefore, be read in a devout, humble, and teachable frame of mind, in order to be rightly understood and fully comprehended.

I satisfy myself with merely indicating this fact, and proceed to notice the proper manifestations of this moral feeling.

1. Holy scripture should be studied under a deep sense of gratitude to God, and in its true character as a Divine revelation. If we look to the Bible as a remarkable and authentic ancient history, we shall receive from it more real information respecting the early ages of the world than all other books, united, can afford. If we are prosecuting researches into the state of civilization, and the condition of mankind in ancient

times; the foundation of the primitive nations, their origin and progress; or are seeking instruction on other topics of great interest to mankind; we shall find it in holy scripture in greater purity and richer abundance than in any other quarter. But the communication of all these important kinds of knowledge is not the great end of revelation. It aims at higher objects, and sends its heavenly light into higher and broader fields of thought, even beyond the amount of all these united. The Bible contains a revelation to mankind of the nature and character of God. Philosophers may expatiate as they please on the wonders of creation, and the marvellous display of Omnipotence and Infinite Wisdom shown forth in the preservation and government of the world; but all these manifestations of Deity, glorious as they confessedly are, make no full and authoritative revelation of the Divine character to man. They do not tell us how God would have us to live, what he requires us to do; whether, if we transgress his will, he will punish or pardon us; above all, they leave us in entire ignorance of our future destiny. The sun shines, the seasons revolve, universal nature proclaims the power, greatness, wisdom, and goodness of God; but these do not speak a word to us respecting his holiness, justice, mercy, or love. For all this vitally important intelligence we must come to the word of God, the gospel of our salvation. It follows, therefore, of necessity, that we must approach these holy records with grateful and teachable minds, for that light and truth which alone can guide us into the will of God.

2. We must prosecute all our studies into the meaning of these living oracles with earnest prayer for Divine illumination. It is to be regretted that some good men and able writers have spoken of the holy scriptures just as if there was some mystical mighty power in the word itself. We do not mean to place these scriptures on a par with other writings in *any* respect. What was said of our Redeemer, may, in a qualified sense, be said of all the inspired men who were called of God to record his holy will: "They spake as never men spake;" and their productions are therefore entitled to universal respect as conveying to us the mind of the Holy Spirit. But then it must not be supposed that these words, of themselves, convey spiritual light or grace, irrespective of the state of mind of the person who peruses them. No, my dear brethren, as we often sing,—

"The meaning of the written word  
Is still by inspiration given."



we must humbly and reverently pray for Divine illumination if we would read the sacred oracles to our spiritual edification. Do not overlook this point. This is a cardinal point, and must not be overlooked. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) Without humble prayer, and the aid of the Holy Spirit, even the word of God, replete as it is with heavenly truth, cannot save, but will rather have a tendency to blunt our feeling, and check our desires, by familiarizing the mind with sacred things which are not spiritually discerned.

Intellectual qualification is also necessary in order to our apprehending the sense of holy writ. Here we have principally to refer to the importance of a sound judgment. We must never forget that the Bible is not, as some would persuade us, a book which none but a select and favoured few can understand. It is, on the contrary, directly addressed by God to every man, for his individual instruction and blessing. It does not, therefore, require mighty and uncommon powers to understand its teaching. Yet, notwithstanding this, a sound judgment is very necessary to enable a person to apprehend the proper meaning of scripture. The exercise of good plain sense will frequently lead to the correct apprehension of texts which learning and ingenuity have failed to understand. This quality of mind should, therefore, be fully exercised in our efforts to arrive at the proper meaning of the sacred writers. All who have had the opportunity of reading the works of biblical interpreters at large, will have perceived that, obvious as this direction is, it has not always been regarded. Men of great name have devoted themselves of set purpose to discover the meaning of the Bible; yet they seem to have laid aside their judgment and sense, and to have conducted their inquiries under the guidance of their imagination and fancy. Such persons may appear to make wonderful discoveries, and may frequently gratify themselves and startle others with what is regarded as successful exposition. But this, after all, will generally be found to amount to no more than the obscuration of scripture by human inventions and fancies: seldom do such efforts issue in the bringing out into full view and vigorous effect the meaning of the Holy Ghost. Sober sense and a sound judgment should always be cultivated and exercised in our endeavours to understand the Bible.

We have mentioned literary qualifications as being requisite. I address myself to a body of men, very few of whom understand any language but their own mother tongue. Yet I am under the necessity of saying, that a knowledge of the original

languages in which the sacred books were written affords important advantages to the expositor of holy scripture. I will give a few instances, showing the nature and extent of this advantage, and then offer a few observations to those who do not possess this acquirement.

As an instance of the importance of an acquaintance with the sacred languages, I may first refer to Prov. xxii. 6, which in our version is rendered, "Train up a child in the way he should go," &c. Few portions of holy writ are more frequently preached from than this; and often peculiar force is laid on the word "train," and we have been again and again told how aptly it sets forth the ductile character of youth, and have been thus encouraged to direct, guide, and train our children, as the sapling is placed in the form in which the future tree is destined to grow. Now all this is very right and good; but the text does not express it. The Hebrew word which our translators have rendered "train," and which the marginal reading still more strangely reads "catechise," really means "dedicate." So the word is rendered in every other place where it is found in holy scripture. See Deut. xx. 5, twice; 1 Kings viii. 63; 2 Chron. vii. 5; and so its derivative, "dedicating," Num. vii. 10, 11, 84, 88; 2 Chron. vii. 9; Neh. xii. 27; Psalm xxx., title; and "dedication," Ezra vi. 16, 17; Dan. iii. 2, 3. Now this dedication was with the Hebrews a solemn religious rite, by which the blood of sacrificial atonement was applied to the dedicated object, and the blessing of God was thus secured on its use and progress. How forcefully does this apply to the case before us! It is not merely educational oversight, or even moral restraint, that is here spoken of; but a *godly dedication*. Fairly considered in the strict sense of the terms employed by the Holy Ghost, this text enjoins parents and teachers to place themselves, by faith and prayer, in the sacred office of the Christian priesthood, and, thus identifying their youthful charge with the blood of atonement, to secure a baptism of spiritual influence on his mind and heart: this being done piously and perseveringly, the cheering promise comes to us full of comfort and blessing: "When he is old, he will not depart from it." How often has this passage been carped and cavilled at! "The children of the most pious persons are frequently the worst," is the common remark; and it is repeatedly asked, "How can this be reconciled with the authoritative declaration of the text?" The answer is, By understanding its meaning. How few of these children were thus dedicated to God according to the

requirement of his word! In several other passages a knowledge of the original languages would give to the student of scripture a clear and full idea of the meaning, which cannot always be obtained from a translation. Thus we are told, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward," &c. (2 Peter iii. 9.) We cannot object to this translation; yet the term "long-suffering," when applied to God, sounds strangely in our ears, and suggests the inquiry, "How can Deity suffer, and suffer long?" The original supplies an answer to the question, and brings out the sense of the text fully, although the translation does not. The word which has been translated "long-suffering," is compounded in Greek, as in our English word. The first part is identical in meaning with our term "long," strictly signifying *long*, or *far*. But the other component part of the term does not, in its primary sense, mean "suffering," but "anger, wrath, rage," &c. As, however, the long-continued suppression of anger gives to a human mind intense pain, the compounded term was sometimes used to express long-continued suffering. Thus it beautifully and forcefully portrays the true sense of the original. What in human minds is scarcely possible,—anger either subsiding into indifference, or merging into reconciliation with the object that excited it,—is seen here in the Divine character. The anger of God against sin does not evaporate or diminish; it does not cease to see and feel the full force of its intense evil; but it delays to punish, it forbears long, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

As previously observed, we have referred to the value of an acquaintance with the original scriptures from a sense of duty, and for the purpose of stimulating all who have the means of doing so to acquire some measure of this knowledge. It is, however, consolatory to those who have not the means of obtaining this advantage, to know that they have in our authorised version a very faithful transcript of the original books. We may select the following testimonies of men of acknowledged piety, judgment, and learning, from a great number which might be adduced. Dr. Adam Clarke, who had previously himself translated every word in the Bible from the original languages, says, "The translators have seized the very spirit and soul of the original, and expressed this almost every where with pathos and energy.....The *original*, from which it was taken, is alone superior to the Bible which was translated by the authority of King James." The Rev. William Orme



affirms, "Like every thing human, it is no doubt imperfect ; but, as a translation of the Bible, it has few rivals, and no superior. It is, in general, faithful, simple, and perspicuous. It has seized the spirit and copied the manner of the Divine originals.....It is level to the understanding of the cottager, and fit to meet the eye of the critic, the poet, and the philosopher." To such a version of the holy records I may direct your attention, with confidence that you will there find all the essential truth revealed by the Divine will to mankind.

Respecting the learning necessary to our rightly understanding and setting forth the sense of this version, it will be sufficient to say, that, in the preceding lecture, we have strongly recommended that an acquaintance with our own language should be acquired as fully as means will allow ; and to this it will be very desirable for the student to add an acquaintance with the history and condition of the nations and times referred to in the sacred books, and also some knowledge of the geography and natural history of these countries, and the chronological connexion of the principal facts in their civil and political annals. Considering the abundance and cheapness of elementary books in the present day, a tolerable amount of knowledge of these subjects is no very difficult acquirement for any young man.

Entering upon the important subject of biblical interpretation, our first business will be to ascertain the duty and office of human reason in such an engagement. We stated at the beginning of the second lecture, that it is the proper exercise of reason to judge of the evidences which attest the Bible to contain a revelation of the Divine will ; but that, when fully convinced of this great fact, it became our duty not to take exception to its teaching, or to object to its communications, but receive with meekness and readiness the truth thus revealed on the authority of God.

We repeat this sentiment now ; but we find a further question demanding solution : "How is the meaning of these records to be ascertained ? Are we to seek out this meaning by the efforts of our reason, or to depend entirely on spiritual illumination ?" Many and serious mistakes have been made at this point of the inquiry, which may be obviated by the simple question, What do we mean by this Divine illumination ? We have already asserted very strongly the necessity of spiritual illumination ; but then this does not give the mind to apprehend a new and arbitrary sense in the words and sentences of holy writ ; but rather, by enlightening and correcting our reason-

ing powers, and purifying the feelings of our heart, it enables the mind to approximate more nearly to the mind of the Spirit, and thus to see in the written word the deep spiritual truth, with which the inspiration of the Holy Ghost originally imbued it. The enthusiast who seeks Divine aid to understand the scripture, and who at the same time neglects to employ those rational and intellectual powers with which the Creator has endowed him, may be compared to a man who seeks a telescope to survey a distant prospect, but closes his eyes whilst using it. In both cases the field of vision which comes before the mind is simply the result of fancy, and has no foundation in fact. The conclusion unquestionably is, that we are not simply to wish and desire the aid of Divine influence ; but if we mean to succeed in our effort to know the meaning of scripture, we must pray, and wait on God, and subject our minds to his will, until we actually and certainly obtain it. And having thus obtained this spiritual illumination, we must diligently and devotedly employ our enlightened minds in an earnest and ardent study of the sacred oracles.

But perhaps some of you will be ready to ask, "Are we, then, having obtained the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit, to seek out the meaning of the scriptures as we would the meaning of any other book?" To this query I shall not hesitate to give this qualified answer : We certainly are to do so, except in those respects in which the Bible differs from all other books. This will require explanation. The Bible is to be explained on the same principles as other books are. Words should be taken in their ordinary acceptation, unless the contrary is expressly stated or fairly implied. Men employ words as signs expressive of their inward emotions ; and therefore the Deity has thought fit to convey his will to them through the same medium. I gladly add the following sound remarks on this subject from the pen of an eminent living author : "Now it is obvious that there are certain rules tacitly acknowledged and followed by all in developing the meaning of a book : these, so far from doing violence to reason, are in reality its genuine dictates. They are sanctioned by the power of judging in all. They are the legitimate offspring of reason itself. The importance as well as the necessity of some principles, to guide us in interpreting an author's meaning, cannot be disputed. Of their great utility in ascertaining the sense of scripture, all classes of Christians must be aware. The evils which have resulted from their non-adoption are immense. The errors into which men departing from them have fallen are innumerable, and

assuredly most dangerous. Men of enthusiastic temperament and warm imaginations, whilst doing violence to them, have run into all manner of excess in religion; and metaphysical minds, in perverting the same simple guides, have gone into systems of belief imbued with no power to improve the heart, or influence the judgment, or purify the motives. Reason, then, adopts and recommends certain principles as worthy of acceptance by all men in their sacred inquiries after truth. It points to them as data, forming an essential part of the expositor's knowledge. The widely different modes of interpretation pursued, show that many have not a sufficient acquaintance with them, or rather that they are neglected by men unpossessed with a right reverence for the language of God. It is strange, that they should be universally followed in the interchange of our ideas with our fellow-men, and that they should be abandoned in our communing with God through his word."

Before discussing the most important of these principles, we proceed to notice those points of exception which the scriptures present, and in respect of which ordinary rules of interpretation do not apply to them.

These are found principally in the prophetic scriptures, and arise out of the peculiar manner in which the subjects of predictive revelation were presented to the minds of the sacred seers. This peculiarity is manifested in various forms of expression, otherwise unintelligible. We find, for instance, events almost lost in the distant future, spoken of as actually present; as, "Unto us a child *is born*, unto us a son *is given*." (Isai. ix. 6.) Again: "Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus, whom I hold by the right hand; to subdue nations before him, and ungird the loins of kings; to open before him the folding doors, and the gates shall not be shut." (Isai. xlv. 1.) Instances of this kind are numerous in the prophetic writings; and they have sometimes been construed literally, and learned men, not apprehending the effect of prophetic inspiration, have argued that these passages must have been written after the events of which they respectively speak had taken place, or the present tense would not have been so strongly used. The solution of the difficulty is, however, this: The Holy Spirit presented the events revealed in such a manner to the mind of the prophet, that all intervening time was annihilated by the power of the inspiration, and distant events were thus realized as present and perfected. For this reason these prophets were called "seers," because their vision penetrated the distant future, and saw things far remote in time as actually



present. This fact and its proper solution have been so fully recognised by biblical scholars, that they have obtained a distinct place in Hebrew grammar under the title of *prophetical preter tenses*.

This explanation will affect many other prophetic scriptures, and affords important caution to those who are devoted to the study of sacred prophecy. We find many predictions pass over a long intervening period of time, and unite, as it were in one prophecy, two or more events very remote in their occurrence from one another. In Isaiah xi. we have one striking proof of this. It opens with a prediction of the appearance of Christ as "a rod out of the stem of Jesse;" proceeds to speak of his personal character and glory, (verses 2—5,) and passes at once to the fullest triumph of the gospel in the conversion of the world, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Verses 6—9.) The long night of darkness occasioned by antichristian error in the church, and Mohammedan delusion without, is altogether overlooked, and the coming of Christ and the millennial glory, are seen in the prophecy as placed in immediate juxtaposition.

Jeremiah i. and li. present a similar example. The capture of Babylon by Cyrus is spoken of as immediately followed by its total ruin and desolation; whereas, in fact, several centuries intervened. For, although the city began to decline immediately after the Persian conquest, it was not totally ruined until the second century of the Christian era, nearly eight hundred years afterward.

We have similar instances in the New Testament. Our Lord speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the end of the world, as one prophecy. (Matt. xxiv. 3—31.) In the first part he dwells on the events which precede and accompany the ruin of the Hebrew capital; (verses 3—28;) and then, without the mention of any intermediate time or events, we read a brief but splendid prediction of the final judgment. (Verses 29—32.)

It will not be necessary to cite more cases, which might be easily done. These will be sufficient to show the class of exceptions to which allusion has been made, and which, when they occur, prevent our applying precisely the same rules of interpretation to holy scripture as we should to other books.

We return, then, to the position from which we started, that, with these exceptions, the Bible is to be interpreted like any other book; but, in asserting this, we differ from many authors, whose learning and diligence have procured for them extensive

influence in the Christian world. We will briefly glance at the most prominent of those systems of interpretation which have been put forth, and which are more or less opposed to this principle.

The first of these is the mode of *allegorical* interpretation. This system is based on the supposition that holy scripture was intended to convey to the able and erudite, not only the ordinary sense, which the words of the text in their grammatical acceptation impart, but also a deeper and more spiritual import, which, although not apparent to all, is clearly and fully perceived by those who, being enlightened and devoted to the attainment of Divine knowledge, adequately apprehend the fulness of scripture truth. This mode had its origin in the east, and was known to the ancient Jews. Philo, a Hebrew who lived in the time of Christ, carried out this system in an eminent degree; and through him it became prevalent in the Christian church. By this means innumerable crude and fantastic notions have been obtruded on mankind as scriptural truth.

Besides this, there is the mode of interpretation which has been called "the accommodation system," from the fact that it assumes that Jesus Christ and his apostles did not do and say what are attributed to them as being essentially right, true, and proper, but by way of accommodation to the errors, prejudices, and erratic notions of the Jews. To mention such a scheme is to show its fallacy; for that which would make our Saviour, who was the very spirit of purity and truth, a time-serving and double-dealing teacher, stands convicted at once of falsehood and absurdity.

The *rationalistic* is another mode of interpretation which has done infinite damage to the cause of revealed truth. It puts itself forward on very plausible grounds, and commends itself to the approval of the carnal and the vain. It takes its stand on philosophy, and deals with the scriptures precisely as it would with a merely human production. By this code the authority and spirituality of revelation have been ignored. What is level to the human understanding may be received; but what transcends it, must be stripped of its power and glory until brought down to this status. This mania (for it deserves the name) has shed a most baneful influence over the learning of Germany, and has also produced fearful effects in our own country. By its agency miracles are reduced to remarkable accidents, prophecies to happy guesses or remarkable coincidences; while the soul and spirit of the Bible—spiritual influence, and the religion of the heart—are explained away. We

cannot keep at too great a distance from this ensnaring evil.

We must notice yet another mode of erroneous interpretation which has been called the "ecclesiastical," or "dogmatic system." This is the Popish mode as laid down by the council of Trent in these terms:—"Let no one venture to interpret the holy scriptures in a sense contrary to that which the holy mother church has held, and does hold, and which has the power of deciding what is the true sense and the right interpretation of the holy scriptures." I apprehend that none who hear me are likely to abandon at once their rights as men, their privilege as Britons, and their duty as Christians, by receiving a *dictum* so extravagant and monstrous. The right of private judgment on the true intent of the word of God has been, and may be, fearfully abused. It is, however, one of our greatest and most precious privileges.

"What, then," I seem to hear you ask, "is the safe and proper mode of arriving at the true and correct sense of the sacred records? Amid so many paths leading to error, how may we find the means of arriving at the truth?" These questions are quite reasonable; and so far as the propounding of rules is concerned, the answer is not difficult. The difficulty will be found in their practical application.

There are, we think, two ruling influences under which the word of God should be studied. In saying this, we allude entirely to literary and intellectual means. We assume all along, that you will always recognise the Divine authority of holy writ; that you will always approach it with deep humility, as a disciple should come to the feet of Christ; and that you will always by faithful prayer secure the gracious guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit. But having done all this, and coming to the written word to ascertain its true meaning and proper sense, there are two things to which you should take special heed: first, you should endeavour to ascertain the correct grammatical sense of the words; and, secondly, consider whether there is any thing in the historical connexion of the passage which ought to modify, limit, or enlarge this ordinary grammatical sense.

That we are perfectly correct in seeking for the sense of scripture in the plain and obvious meaning of the terms employed, is clear from the fact, that it was given to us for this precise purpose. It was "written for our learning;" and it could not answer this important end on any other principle. The Holy Spirit has condescended to place before us the great



body of Divine truth in the language of men. But if the language so used is not to be received and interpreted as men are accustomed to understand it, the revelation misleads instead of directs, and teaches those only who are specially directed to the proper key to its true sense: a supposition which is completely set aside by the apostolic appeal, "Judge ye what I say," and by the fact that "all" are distinctly stated to be "left without excuse" who do not, from this source, elicit clear and sufficient spiritual guidance. Further, as has been most judiciously observed, two things are necessary to the excellence and moral character of any writing, which professes to give instruction on subjects of importance; namely, that the words employed should be in the commonly-received sense; and that its figures of speech, if any be adopted, should be framed to place in stronger light the sentiment to be conveyed, and to give it greater force with the judgment by calling in the aid of the imagination. Where these qualities are not found, the writing is not only bad in a literary sense, but in a moral sense also: if it is not the production of ignorance, it is intentionally deceptive and misleading. In the Bible both those requisites are found most abundantly; it is, as before observed, "written for our learning," the learning of the great body of mankind, and is fully adapted to this end by its Divine Author.

Having, therefore, settled the important point, that words are to be taken in their strict grammatical sense, the question comes, How are we to distinguish tropical and figurative expressions, which, according to eastern usage, abound in holy writ? When, for instance, we read our Saviour's testimony to the Baptist, "He was a burning and a shining light," no man, scarcely any Sunday-scholar, has any difficulty in comprehending its meaning. Still that meaning is not literal, but figurative. There are many passages, however, in which the tropical or figurative character of the language is not quite so obvious. Notice the declaration, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." (Luke xxi. 24.) This, to some extent, was literally fulfilled; yet we cannot think that the treading of the feet of the Romans on this city was that which the Saviour intended so forcibly to predict. He clearly meant to speak of the desolation and destruction which they would inflict on that devoted place, and which is very vividly represented by the tropical terms "trodden down." We shall have to refer again to the interpretation of figurative language; and we mention the subject now for the purpose of showing how almost imperceptibly plain language merges into figurative

expression, and to lay down the important rule, that on no account should terms be regarded as figurative, if they, in their plain and ordinary sense, agree with the words with which they are connected. The literal sense of words is always to be preferred; and no expressions are to be regarded as figurative, unless the context explicitly states it, or the connexion in which they stand renders it certain. In fact, when there is a plain necessity for departing from the literal sense, then we must evidently admit the tropical; *but in no other case whatever.*

Besides the grammatical sense of the words, a man who would successfully apprehend in his own mind the meaning of the sacred record, and convey that meaning to others, must carefully consider the historical circumstances and connexion of the words he is perusing. We should, therefore, endeavour always to have an idea present in our minds of the writer of the book; the speaker of the words under consideration, when this person is different from the writer; and of the persons to whom the words are addressed. In the cases to which these apply, they will suggest important means of understanding the true intent of the language. And, generally, attention must be given to the age, circumstances, occasion, and scope of the writer. The student who has not access to many books will find important aid in a careful and constant reference to the analysis of scripture given in the preceding lectures. How many a man has explained a passage from the Proverbs as if it had been taken from the Gospel of John! How frequently do we find a sense put on the words of Old-Testament writers which they were never intended to convey! Attention to these matters gives to the Bible its true and proper, but vast and wonderful, variety; and at the same time invests its sacred communications with marvellous precision. The union of these two points—of the grammatical sense of words, and the historical connexion of the text, as guides to its proper sense—have formed the scheme of interpretation which is now adopted by our ablest biblical scholars, under the name of the “grammatico-historical mode of interpretation,” which indeed cannot be too strongly recommended.

When, however, we are advising a student as to the best means of understanding his Bible, there is one master-truth to which his attention should be called, the application of which will perhaps be of more practical utility to him than any other. The truth referred to is this: that holy scripture never contradicts itself; that all its teaching is in direct harmony; and

therefore the comparing of scripture with scripture is not only a perfectly legitimate mode of interpretation, but one which, when pursued with industry and judgment, is sure to be attended by the most satisfactory results.

This way of acquiring a knowledge of the meaning of the Divine word arises out of a most remarkable fact,—the perfect unity and harmony of the sacred records. If these had been written by one person, or in one age, or had related to the same particular subject, or had been of the same kind, the marvel would in a great measure disappear. But in the Bible we find nothing of this kind. Here we have a great number of separate and apparently independent books, the composition of which extended over a period of from sixteen to seventeen hundred years. The persons who wrote them were, consequently, isolated from each other in time, and, as respects many of them, equally so in space. Some of these were written in Egypt, or in the deserts of Sinai, others in Palestine, some in Babylon and Assyria, many in Asia Minor, Greece, or Rome. Several of these books are historical, some poetical, a few treat of ethics, others of ecclesiastical law. We have numerous biographies, narratives, and epistles. Yet, notwithstanding all this diversity, so wonderfully are these writings imbued with the prescient spirit of heavenly truth, that we have no contradiction of fact or doctrine, from Genesis to the Apocalypse. It breathes the same spirit and testimony, every where, to the grand scheme of redeeming mercy in Christ Jesus.

This wonderful fact leads, as we have observed, to a most important means of scriptural interpretation. The statement with which we started this topic, is undeniably the dictate of sound reason: "Scripture cannot contradict itself." We recognise the inspired writers as holy men; we mark the result of their different situations, languages, countries, and mental characteristics, as yet impressed on their works; yet we regard them only as the media through whom we receive a revelation from God. They are not the authors of the inspired word: they "wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Divine Spirit, then, which dictated this revelation, did not move one person to write one thing, and another to pen the contrary. We do, indeed, find a gradual developement of truth: but the faintest initial rays are always in perfect harmony with the meridian gospel sunlight. This, then, affords a most important rule for ascertaining the meaning of the sacred record: "The scripture does not contradict itself." Our limits



will only allow us to apply this to one particular subject ; but that shall be an important one. Both the Old and New Testaments speak of the Messiah as Divine. The most unmistakeable ascription of Divine attributes and works are repeatedly found ; the high and holy names of Deity are directly given to him ; and in every kind of manner Jesus Christ is declared to be God. With equal force and precision of language, he is also, in numerous other passages of scripture, said to be a man. How, then, are these several statements to be explained ? No subject ever placed under the consideration of mankind has called forth more ingenuity or intellectual power than this : all that the mind of man can do has been done here. And what is the result ? Why, those who have neglected to discover or to recognise our cardinal rule, that the scripture does not contradict itself, have endeavoured, in every conceivable way, to strike a balance, or to make a kind of compromise between these two apparently conflicting classes of scripture texts. Accordingly, an ideal being has been imagined, something more than man, yet less than God ; and this has been ascribed to the Saviour. From Arius to the present hour, the church and the world have been cursed with such speculations ; such persons not perceiving that their course violates the teaching of the Bible. Their creation accords neither with the one class of texts nor with the other. An attentive observance of our rule will lead to a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. Christ is declared to be truly and properly Divine. No other part of holy writ can contradict this teaching : Christ must therefore be truly and properly God. He has attributed to him all that belongs essentially to human nature, and must therefore be truly man. Yet these truths cannot contradict each other. What, then, is the inevitable conclusion to which we are conducted ? Clearly this : that the Saviour united in his own person both natures, the Divine and the human. This reconciles the entire teaching of the Bible in respect of Christ, and places fully before us the grand truth of the Christian system, the incarnation of the Son of God.

But the principle to which such prominent reference has been made will take us farther than this, and encourage us to a course of procedure calculated more than any other to give us a clear and full apprehension of the meaning of the word of God. If the scripture does not contradict itself, but is always in harmony in all its parts, then *comparing scripture with scripture* must be the means most likely to give us a correct acquaintance with its proper sense. This course is so distinctly

recommended in holy writ, and is fraught with such obvious advantage, that it requires neither argument nor illustration to enforce or explain it. Only one instance of its important use shall be given. We read, "When he had by himself purged our sins." (Heb. i. 3.) Archbishop Newcome renders this text, "When he had by *the sacrifice* of himself purged our sins." To this addition Socinian writers object; but that it gives the correct sense of the writer, is evident; for, if we turn to another passage, we find the means by which Christ purged away our sins distinctly and specifically declared: "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by *the sacrifice of himself*." (Heb. ix. 26.)

There is, indeed, scarcely any limit to the advantage to be derived from this course; scarcely any bounds to the evils which have resulted from the neglect of it. Whence have come all the errors and heresies which have divided, distracted, and so often paralyzed the church? So far as they are error, and not wilful perversions of truth for the attainment of selfish, ambitious, and wicked ends, they have mostly, and perhaps wholly, arisen from the neglect of this means of eliciting the true meaning of holy scripture. Men have been fascinated with some particular portion of revealed truth, they have bent their whole mind to its developement, and have consequently given it undue relative importance. Other truths, equally a part of Divine teaching, have been lightly esteemed, and partial views of doctrines, laws, and scriptural facts have obtained currency and credit. Let me beseech you, my dear brethren, to avoid this evil. Study the whole Bible. Some men have a partiality for one part, and some for another; but do you always remember that all of it is Divine. Adhere to the whole; let its united teaching be blended together in your knowledge and views of religious truth.

It will now be necessary to direct attention to the best means of discovering the sense of some of those peculiarities of language found in holy scripture. In the first place we notice tropical or figurative language. We have already shown that all language is to be taken in its literal sense, except when there is an evident necessity for admitting its figurative character. This is obviously correct; but numerous cases occur in which terms must certainly be understood in a tropical or figurative manner. All words were assuredly at first employed in their plain and literal meaning. Afterward, as the scope of language extended, and the number of subjects discussed were multiplied, a necessity arose for using the same word to express

different meanings ; and thus it became common to use a word to represent any thing similar, or bearing some analogy to the original idea which it was intended to convey. Thus tropical or figurative language arose into use. This, however, is not now the only purpose of using terms in a secondary or figurative sense. Speakers and writers find that the frequent use of the same word, expressing the same idea, gives monotony and tameness to their style ; and therefore, for the purpose of affording animation, ornament, and vigour to their language, they frequently use words in a tropical sense.

This being the case, it is a matter of some consequence, and, as we have already shown, sometimes of some difficulty, to ascertain whether terms are to be received in their literal or in a figurative sense. In order to this, it will be necessary to consider the nature of the subject treated of, the character and scope of the composition, and the information to be derived from parallel passages, when such occur.

The nature of the subject treated of must be considered, and the accordance of the words employed in regard to it. When, for instance, we read, "*Gird up the loins of your mind ;*" (1 Peter i. 13 ;) "*The sincere milk of the word ;*" (1 Peter ii. 2 ;) "*The breastplate of righteousness ;*" (Eph. vi. 14 ;) "*living stone ;*" (1 Peter ii. 4 ;) we instantly perceive that the language cannot be understood literally, and must be regarded as figurative. The same rule must apply to every case in which the grammatical sense of the words is naturally incongruous with the subject matter ; such as, "*Thou shalt catch men ;*" (Luke v. 10 ;) "*God will smite thee, thou whited wall.*" (Acts xxiii. 3.) &c.

The character and scope of the composition must also be considered. If, for instance, the whole book has a poetical character, and is replete with tropes and figures, we should be justified in regarding language as used in a figurative sense, although the same words found in a plain unadorned prose composition might be taken literally. The remarkable passage found in 2 Peter iii. 3—13, may be given as an instance. Many writers strongly wish to invest these expressions with a figurative character, to the destruction of their literal meaning. Now, if we had found this passage in the Book of Revelation, which is full of figure and imagery, we might be justified in adopting this course ; but finding it in an epistle the whole character of which is prosaic, and entirely destitute of imagery and ornament, we cannot consent to admit any figurative sense, but are bound to receive it as a distinct revelation of the real conflagra-



tion of the visible universe. The form of expression in which the statement is found, and its immediate context, must also have careful attention. Of the first class we may notice such texts as these: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you;" (Matt. vii. 6;) "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" &c. (Luke vi. 41, 42;) which are easily recognised as exhibiting important moral truths in short figurative sentences. The context also will generally enable us to decide as to the literal or figurative sense in which words are to be understood. When, for instance, we read a text like the following, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning," (Luke xii. 35,) in connexion with what immediately precedes and follows it, we can have no doubt that it is a figurative expression, intended to convey in a forcible manner the sense, "Be always ready."

There is another class of figurative expressions which are placed in such immediate connexion with plain and literal terms, that scarcely a doubt can be entertained as to their character. Of this kind are such scriptures as the following: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." (Matt. xi. 29.) "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers." (Phil. iii. 2.) "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James iv. 4.) In all these cases, and numerous others, the figurative nature of the first clause is declared and explained by the literal sense of the words immediately following. Parallel passages afford information very similar to that obtained from the literal clauses of these mixed sentences. Thus, when our Saviour plainly says, "Lazarus is dead," (John xi. 14,) he clearly explains the meaning of the tropical language which he had previously employed. (Verse 11.)

We must now add a few observations, for the purpose of assisting you to apprehend the true intent and meaning of tropical and figurative expressions, when they occur.

When, as in many of the preceding instances, the writer himself affords an explanation, there can be no difficulty, whether this is done in direct terms, as in some of the cases cited above, or the meaning be clearly deducible from the general tenor of his discourse. Thus, when our Saviour compares the Pharisees to *whited sepulchres*, adding, "which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness," (Matt. xxiii. 27,) the figura-

tive language is immediately explained; and this explanation would be equally clear if it had been removed to another part of the discourse. Terms directly contrasted with others, not unfrequently afford a clue to the meaning of figurative terms. Thus we are not told what our Saviour meant when he spoke of giving a stone instead of bread, and a fish instead of a serpent. But he does show us that by the gifts of bread and fish, he means "good gifts;" (Matt. vii. 11;) that is, useful, salutary, beneficial donations; and, consequently, we undoubtedly infer that by the *stone* and the *serpent* we are to understand useless and pernicious gifts. The context very frequently not only detects the figure, as before observed, but also explains it. This is the case in the important scripture, John vi. 38, 39. At other times, however, neither the context nor parallel passages afford any immediate solution of the figurative language; yet, even in such circumstances, we must not give up the case in despair, but persevere in comparing scripture with scripture, until our diligence is rewarded with a clear apprehension of the meaning of the sacred text. We may notice one passage of this kind. Jesus said to the women who followed him to Calvary, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke xxiii. 31.) Neither the scope of the passage nor the context explains the meaning of these words, nor is their sense very apparent: all that we can ascertain from their connexion is just this, that they seem to threaten fearful evils to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; but on what ground, or for what reason, is by no means clear. If, however, we turn to Ezek. xx. 47, we find this prophecy, "Say to the forest of the south, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming fire shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein." This language is explained by the prophet a few verses onward, thus: "Say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked;" (Ezek. xxi. 3;) which shows that by the "green tree," we are to understand the righteous: and by "the dry," the wicked inhabitants of Judea. The figurative language of our Saviour is, therefore, parallel to the words of Peter: "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter iv. 18.) Thus explained, the words we have considered conveyed, in the mildest language, the most fearful threaten-

ing :—" Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children ; for if sufferings like mine are inflicted on one who knew no sin, what shall be the fate of those who clamoured for the blood of the innocent, and rejected the counsel of God against their own souls ?"

We must now add a few very brief remarks on the poetry, the symbolical language, and on the types of holy scripture ; and thus hasten to close the present address.

Poetry makes an important part of holy scripture. Much of it is, indeed, concealed from the English reader by the prosaic form of its translation ; but even this cannot cover the lofty sentiments and brilliant imagery which clearly show its poetic character.

A large portion of Hebrew poetry is lyrical, or adapted to musical accompaniment. In this section, the Hebrews appear to have equalled the most favoured nations of antiquity. Nothing was too great for the grasp of their poetic power, nothing too small to be raised and elevated into high importance by their genius. Several epithets are applied to this species of sacred poetry. It is generally called "Song," or simply "Poetry;" at other times it is spoken of under four names or classes. First the title "Hymn" is often applied to sacred poetry ; for although this word is only once used as the title of a hymn, it is very clear that it really describes the character of many ; such as Exod. xv., Judges v., Psalm xviii., xxx., xxxii., xli., Isai. xxxviii., and others. There was also the "dirge," or song of sorrow. See 2 Sam. i. 17—27 ; iii. 33, 34 ; Jer. vii. 29 ; ix. 19 ; Psalm xlv., lx., lxxiii. A third class is composed of Psalm vii., and Hab. iii., and the fourth contains hymns of prayer.

In this portion of holy writ you will find imagery of the most glowing description in the richest profusion. Natural objects of all kinds are brought into requisition, and exhibited with marvellous power and beauty. The arts, manners, and circumstances of Hebrew life are also employed ; and a careful study of these sublime songs will enable the diligent student to apprehend Hebrew life in all its peculiarity, perhaps more fully than he can do by any other means. But, above all other matters, the most important and interesting portions of the poetic imagery of the Hebrews were derived from their religious history, and the sacred topics which arose out of the Divine revelations with which they were favoured. Here the Hebrew bards soared beyond those of every other nation ; and we consequently have, in their inspired compositions, not only a treasure-house of beauty and



blessing, where the soul may be raised to the contemplation of the most glorious themes, and be brought under influences alike elevating and purifying ; we have here also a school of practical divinity, where the holiest lessons of scriptural experience may be learned, and through which the saved spirit may be guided into the most holy communion with God.

Holy scripture abounds with symbolical language ; and it is very probable that this circumstance which, at first sight, may appear as rather against their plainness and perspicuity, is really very favourable in these respects. There is truth and sound sense in the observation of an eminent man ; namely, that “ characters and words are not natural but arbitrary signs, and therefore may and do change with the changes of time and of men. Symbols are either pictures of things actually existing, or of ideas which these things naturally excite, and therefore not arbitrary, but natural signs, fixed and permanent as the things themselves. For the same reasons, the symbolical is an universal language. Since, then, the prophecies are intended for all countries and ages, the symbolical language, being universal and unchangeable, must for such a purpose be the best adapted.” It is certain that they thus afford to all ages and countries just the precise amount of information which the Holy Ghost intended to communicate ; and cast over all future predicted contingencies that measure of obscurity which it pleased him to make equal in measure to all people.

As an illustration of this, we may observe that the symbols exhibited in the dreams of Joseph would be universally intelligible ; and a parent, whether in Egypt, or Asia, or Britain, might guess at their meaning as Jacob did.

Our limits will not allow us even to sketch in outline the principal symbols of holy writ : nor do we think it could conduce to any useful end to attempt a general exposition of the leading scriptural symbols. It were easy to say, that the sun usually represents supreme power ; stars, sometimes kings, and at others inferior magistrates ; that a kingdom or empire, in all its parts and ages, is symbolized by one body or animal form, and so on : but this will afford little instruction. Each case must be judged on its own merits, and be explained by its attendant circumstances.

A word respecting types. A type in ordinary language is a model, pattern, or likeness of some other thing. But more than this is necessary to constitute a scriptural type. The type must not only resemble some other thing which is to follow it, and which is called its antitype, but it must also have been

designed as something preparatory to the other. In fact, the resemblance and the connexion must be parts of Divine arrangement and appointment. The clearest and best definition of a type, in its theological aspect, is that afforded by the apostle, "A shadow of good things to come;" (Heb. x. 1;) or, as we have it in another passage, "A shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Col. ii. 17.) The latter text supplies an important element; for nothing is more certain than that Christ and his work are the great united antitypes of all typical instruction.

Our limits will not allow even a recital of the more important types found in the Old Testament. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedec, Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph, were eminently typical of Christ: so were Moses, Joshua, and many others in Old-Testament times. There were also typical things, as the burning bush, the manna, the rock, &c. There were also typical actions: the exodus, the passage of the Red Sea, the crossing of the Jordan. Many ritual types were also appointed, such as circumcision, sacrifices, &c.

It has been well observed, that as there must be resemblance in a type, so there must be diversity. It is not sameness, but likeness, and this will be the resemblance of the less to the greater.

We cannot do better than instance Old-Testament sacrifice as typical of the efficacious death of Christ. Here we see the substitution of one creature for another, the suffering of death, as showing what the sinner deserves as the punishment of his sin; and as a part of the immolated animal was always eaten, we have also a vivid representation of the benefit which is derived from this vicarious sacrifice. How marvellous, how merciful, was all this arrangement, that such a rite, coupled with a distinct promise of a suffering Saviour, should thus typify, embody, and visibly set forth from the beginning the death of Jesus, and so offer to all, even in that initial dispensation, salvation by faith alone!

O, my brethren, let me commend to you this blessed Bible: study it always, give yourselves to it, and it will teach you to save yourselves, and them that hear you.

## LECTURE XIV.

### ON PREACHING.

**THE** Object of all the preceding Lectures—Preaching in all Ages the great Means of instructing Man in the Things of God—This shown—**THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF GOSPEL PREACHING**—We preach Christ—His pre-existent Glory—The Manifestation of himself to Patriarchs, to Moses, and the Prophets—Especially his wondrous Incarnation—Life—Teaching—Labours—Sorrows—Death—Resurrection—And glorious Ascension—In all these respects know Christ intimately and preach him fully—But, beyond all, preach his atoning Merit—Redemption through his Blood—**THE OBJECT AND END OF PREACHING**—For what Purpose do we preach?—Is it to display our Talents—To disseminate our Opinions—To teach and raise Men to moral Elevation?—These, united, do not constitute the proper Object of Preaching—This is the Conversion of Souls, and the building of them up in Holiness—Means of effecting this—Leading Sinners to a Conviction of their Sin and Danger—Turning them from Sin to Christ—Faith in Christ to be specially enforced—Believers to be particularly considered in Preaching—To be fed with Divine Truth, and defended by its Power from their Enemies—This Duty enforced, and Objections answered—**THE MANNER OF PREACHING**—The Matter which Sermons should contain—Holy Scripture should be asserted and explained—Examples—Holy Scripture must be confirmed and enforced—How this may be done in Respect of doctrinal and practical Subjects—The Application specially enforced—The Manner in which our Sermons should be arranged—Care in the Selection of a Text—Unity of a Sermon—Proper divisional Arrangement—Plans of Sermons selected from several eminent Ministers—The Introduction and Conclusion—The Manner in which a Sermon should be delivered—It should be spoken as a Message from God to Mankind—All Affectation and Vulgarity to be avoided—Let the Discourse be delivered in a suitable Tone of Voice, and with a proper Measure of Action—The Motives which should impel us to Duty and Diligence in this Work—The Value of the Soul, its vast Capacities, Powers, and Immortality—The Influence of one Soul on others greatly enhances the Importance of its Salvation—The Glory of God and Honour of our Saviour—These Motives should lead us to the utmost Zeal and Perseverance.

My dear brethren, we have now reached the culminating point of our undertaking. I have led you through a long course of study; many important subjects have passed in succession under our consideration; you have been earnestly invited to acquire a certain amount of knowledge; and all this has been done with a steady view to one given object, with an undeviating reference to one great end; namely, that we may be better able to preach the gospel of the Son of God.

From a careful and extended inquiry into the subject, it



seems clear, that, in all ages, and under every dispensation of grace, preaching has been appointed by God as the grand means of teaching and persuading mankind to submit themselves to his will, and to experience that mercy which his grace has provided for them.

We know but little of the first human family; but enough seems to be told to justify the opinion, that Abel died in consequence of his faithful exposition and vindication of the truth of God. Is not this opinion confirmed by the language of the apostle, "And by it, he being dead, *yet speaketh?*" Enoch, we know, delivered discourses full of energy, power, and Divine truth. Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Abraham was a prophet, who commanded his household after him to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment. (Gen. xviii. 19.) Moses was a most eminent prophet and preacher. Nothing could exceed the anxiety of this great man for the promulgation of Divine truth. He commanded it to be engraved on pillars, to be written in books, and to be taught in public and private by word of mouth. (Deut. iv. 9; vi. 9; xvii. 18; xxvii. 8; xxxi. 9; Num. v. 23.) In every way he carried out his own principles, and practised what he taught. When Aaron and he first addressed the people, they believed and worshipped God. (Exod. iv. 31.) And who can conceive the degree of rapture with which his last discourses were delivered and received? (Deut. xxxiii.)

When the whole of the ecclesiastical apparatus provided at Sinai failed to keep the Israelites from direct rebellion against God, the Lord extended the gracious prophetic inspiration with which Moses had been endowed to seventy of the elders of Israel; and they prophesied. The manner in which this incident is related, the apparently irregular conduct of two of these inspired men, the proposal of Joshua, and the dignified and magnanimous declaration of Moses, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" (Num. xi. 29,) clearly show the great importance attached to this spiritual agency, and the beneficial influence which it had on the people. Joshua, also, although not a priest or a Levite, was solemnly inducted by Moses into the office of ruler and teacher of the Israelites, and was "full of the spirit of wisdom." (Deut. xxxiv. 9.) How frequently he delivered religious discourses to the people, we cannot tell; but we know that he did so, and with the most salutary effect. What can exceed the interest which invested the gathering of the tribes together at Shechem, when the son

of Nun delivered his ever-memorable discourse to them, prior to his departure to his heavenly rest, and when he so earnestly and solemnly reared up a witness for God under an oak, that the people might not depart from the law of the Lord?

Samuel, also, was an eminent preacher, and the founder or restorer of a school of preachers, whose agency did much to raise Israel from the verge of total idolatry and barbarism, and to bring them to a knowledge of God, and to the experience of the blessings of his covenant mercy. David followed in the same course. With what simplicity and pious earnestness does this greatest of men bear testimony to his unswerving fidelity as a preacher!—"I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation." (Psalm xl. 9, 10.) Solomon, in the days of his youth and piety, followed in the steps of his father, and was led to place himself before the church and the world as emphatically "the preacher." (Eccles. i. 1.) In the declining period of Hebrew history, and during the captivity, the preaching of the inspired prophets appears to have been incessant. In season and out of season, in the city, at the gate of the temple, or on the banks of a river in a foreign land, the prophets of God faithfully set forth his will, and called the people to submit to his law, and receive his covenant mercy. During the captivity, and after the restoration, the same course was pursued: pious and holy men were called by God to this great work, and urged by his Spirit to reprove, exhort, and teach the people that they might walk in the way of the Lord. Ezra and Nehemiah were the most eminent among those who successfully prosecuted this great work. The former of these, as a scribe of the law of God, had most to do with the religious regeneration of his people. To him, probably, we owe the introduction of a kind of preaching, which, in its ultimate developement, has led to the present mode of religious discourses. Previously, preachers either propounded Divine truth by direct revelation, or enjoined on the people the observance of well-known and long-established laws. The Jews, during their long captivity, had, to a great extent, lost the knowledge of their ancient language, and had acquired a mode of speech, which, on a Hebrew basis, had incorporated a large portion of the Chaldaic and other dialects of the people amongst whom the Jews had sojourned in their captivity. Formerly preachers

had only to explain subjects ; now, in consequence of this change, they had to unfold the meaning of words, and to afford a complete exposition of the Divine law.

From this time preaching was an established institution in the Hebrew church. Synagogues were multiplied ; and not only were singing and prayer regularly continued in these sanctuaries, but the word of God was read, explained, and enforced on every sabbath day, either by appointed ministers, or by other pious men who were taught of the Holy Spirit to speak to the edification of their brethren. The immediate forerunner of Christ was an eminent preacher. His manner of address, eloquence, earnestness, and zeal, were such, that multitudes flocked to hear him, and many submitted to receive baptism at his hands.

Our blessed Lord used the same means to instruct, enlighten, and bring the people to God. He, speaking as never man spake, preached the word unto the people. And when the Master, having accomplished his great mission on earth, ascended on high to sit on the mediatorial throne, and to carry into effect all the great purposes of his grace, he left his apostles and disciples to make known his dying love to a perishing world by preaching the gospel of his grace. It is impossible for any one candidly to consider the teaching of Christ, the conduct of the apostles, the results of their ministry, and the repeated declarations which they made of their course of duty, without perceiving that this was indeed intended to be the grand means of bringing all nations to the knowledge of Christ. It was not in ecclesiastical arrangements, however desirable and necessary, not in the administration of sacraments, although commanded and appointed by Christ, nor by any other agency as a primary and efficient means ; but simply by a preached gospel, that the world is to be brought to a knowledge of God. "We preach Christ crucified," exclaimed the great apostle ; "for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." (1 Cor. i. 17, 23.) Every other institution, even the most sacred and solemn of the Christian system, is secondary to this grand initial agency. According to our Redeemer's great commission, all nations are to be taught all his words, to be *discipled* and then baptized. (Matt. xxviii. 18—20.)

You, my brethren, are called to this duty, are recognised by the church as engaged in this work. On the nature of a call to preach, and of the qualifications necessary for this sacred work, I need not now dwell. My present purpose is to bring before your minds, in order, the great subject-matter of gospel-preaching ; its object and end ; the best manner of perform-



ing this hallowed work ; and the impelling motives which should lead us to a diligent discharge of this duty.

I have, in the first place, to call your earnest and prayerful attention to the subject-matter of Christian preaching, which I cannot better present to your consideration than as "Christ, and him crucified ;" as presenting to the world a free, a present, and a full salvation.

After what has been said in the preceding lectures on the doctrines of holy scripture, it is scarcely necessary for me to observe here, that the provisions of the gospel, and, consequently, its preaching, are based on the admitted fact of the ruin of the human family through sin, and the consequent condemnation and exposure to everlasting misery of every man. As holy scripture begins with the history of the fall, it proceeds in all its future course to exhibit and develope the fearful results, until it has fully proved, that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," and are, consequently, all become "guilty before God," (Rom. iii. 19, 23,) and exposed to "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 9.) To a world of sinners in this ruined and lost condition, with no means of their own to effect their escape or deliverance, the gospel of the Son of God comes with glad tidings of salvation. These, my brethren, we have been called to propound and proclaim. This is the burden of our duty, the joy of our heart. Let me, then, direct your minds to a profitable contemplation of the subject-matter of this glorious announcement.

First, then, in the order of time and of importance, "We preach Christ." Many humanly-conceived plans for the amelioration and benefit of mankind derive their efficacy from the nature and arrangements of the remedial mode adopted ; so that, this being acted on, almost any agent can carry it into efficacious operation. It is not so with the gospel of Christ. Never, indeed, was there a scheme devised so vast in its design, so grand in its contemplated results, one which demanded so much wisdom, power, and sacrifice for its accomplishment, or which, stretching over so long a period, offered such an infinite range of blessing, as that which we find revealed in the holy gospel. But this plan, glorious as it is in all respects, is not the great cause of salvation, or the crowning glory of redemption : these centre in Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. We have spoken at length on his nature, character, and redeeming work : to all this we wish to recall your attention,

whilst presenting Christ to your view as the subject-matter of gospel preaching.

Consider the eternal Son of God in all his pre-existent glory, throned with the Father before all worlds, creating all things, in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; calling all things into existence by himself, and for himself; and sustaining, directing, governing all, by the word of his power,—God over all, blessed for ever. Then behold him making man in the likeness of God, endowing the first pair with every excellence, physical, intellectual, and moral; placing them in circumstances of earthly enjoyment, and blessing them with high and holy intercourse with God, but at the same time crowning this intercourse with his special presence. O that we could have a brief history of the transactions of Paradise, and see the Divine Son, walking and talking with primitive humanity in all its pristine innocence until they even knew the sound of his footstep! (Gen. iii. 8.) But man fell. Sin entered into the world, and death by sin. The foul pollution extended to every faculty of the human mind, to every thought, feeling, and affection of the heart; human nature was ruined and lost; and the curse came upon all to condemnation.

How did this fearful event affect the manifestation of the Son of God? Did he fly from the scene of dishonour and guilt? Did he abandon to the helpless and hopeless ruin into which they had wickedly plunged themselves, the creatures whom he had made? On the contrary, it was then especially that his gracious and effective interposition on their behalf began. It was this terrible emergency which brought out the unsearchable treasures of wisdom and mercy for the salvation of mankind. All the extent of the evil had been met: for the desperate ruin an efficient remedy was provided: the infinite range of human want was as immediately and as perfectly supplied, as if the world had been created for the special purpose of being redeemed.

But in all this the Son of God was pre-éminent. He judged the offenders, and pronounced their doom; but in doing this he shadowed forth in outline that wondrous scheme of mercy, by which he himself would wrest the prey from the grasp of the mighty, trample death and hell beneath his feet, and raise redeemed humanity to the highest seat of heavenly glory. This grand remedy for the world's misery was immediately brought into operation. A manifestation of the Divine presence was given to man, (Gen. iv. 14—16,) a way of access to

it by the blood of animal sacrifice appointed, and sufficient information of this new and gracious economy afforded, to form the foundation for a saving faith in the promised Redeemer. (Heb. xi. 4.)

But in all this, and throughout all its future developement, the sum and centre, the living, operating power which imbued and carried out this whole remedial economy, was Christ. He ministered to Abel, through the Spirit, an assurance of Divine favour. He walked and talked with Enoch, until he took him to heaven. He was the object of Noah's faith, and the living energy through which that holy man was enabled, for a long season, to bear a faithful witness for God against the sins of the world by preaching his holy truth, and rearing up an ark for the deliverance of himself and his family from the universal flood. It was Christ who, as the visible Jehovah, held frequent converse with the father of the faithful, and who in human form ate of his lambs, flesh, and butter, and milk; at the same time displaying all the glorious attributes of the Godhead in alternate judgment and mercy. (Gen. xviii., xix. 24—26.) This Divine Son was, indeed, accessible to all the pious, throughout this patriarchal period. He could hear the sorrowful inquiry of Rebekah, and satisfy her maternal solicitude. (Gen. xxv. 23, 24.) He allowed Jacob, in the depth of his apprehension and distress, by wrestling agony to prevail with him and secure his blessing.

It was, however, to Moses, and throughout the whole of the Levitical economy, that Christ most gloriously manifested himself prior to his incarnation. From the revelation of his glory in the bush at Horeb, to the close of the wonderful career of Moses, the presence of Christ constantly attended the steps of the Hebrew lawgiver. In the pillar of the cloud, as the angel of Jehovah, and especially in the glorious Shekinah of God over the mercy-seat between the cherubim, the Son of God was ever present with his church in the wilderness. And Moses knew well with whom he had to do. When this Holy One had been grievously provoked by the continued unfaithfulness and rebellions of the people, he threatened to leave them, and to send an angel who should drive out the Canaanite from before the Israelites: but the man of God positively declined such aid. No created power, although an angel from heaven, would meet his case. He accordingly flew to the sanctuary, prostrated himself before the Lord, crying, "If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence." His prayer was heard: the Lord himself responded to his cry, "My presence shall



go with thee, and I will give thee rest." (Exod. xxxiii. 12—15.)

The same course of Divine manifestation continued throughout the whole history of the Hebrew church. The prophets saw the power of Christ. Isaiah beheld his glory, and spake of him. (John xii. 41.) Ezekiel saw Him as "the likeness on the throne" over the living cherubim "as the appearance of a man." (Ezek. i. 26.) And He walked up and down in the fire of the Babylonian furnace with the three faithful Hebrews.

Christ was indeed the subject of prophetic song, as well as the source of prophetic inspiration. It was of him they spoke; his wondrous humiliation and marvellous sacrifice was the burden beneath which they struggled. The mighty theme bore down all their genius and strength, and even overpowered the energy of their inspiration; while the glorious triumphs of his grace raised their holy spirits to the highest measure of rapture, and exhausted all the sources of poetic imagery and prophetic power.

The Son of God is, indeed, the subject of the Old-Testament scriptures. The carnal and unspiritual mind may dwell on its history, biography, national annals, ethics, poetry, proverbs, and general literature, and may discern nothing beneath the surface of these external and secondary subjects; but the man who enters into the Divine purpose, and spiritually apprehends the sense and scope, as well as the letter, of revelation, will see in all these a higher and deeper range of heavenly truth, of which Christ is the subject and the sum. And, indeed, but for him and his great work and ultimate glory these would not have been. Who can adequately conceive of the Divine purpose in redemption, and imagine the history of Hebrew ignorance, unbelief, and apostasy occupying so large a portion of the pages of holy scripture, merely on its own account? No, these and other portions are placed on the inspired records, as essential parts of one great whole; and of this, the person and work of Christ are the grand and ruling elements.

But, my brethren, clear, continual, and glorious as are these manifestations of Christ in the Old-Testament scriptures, it is not to them mainly and prominently that your attention is now directed. They were, indeed, glorious revelations of God to man; they brought heaven and earth into positive and abiding contact, and associated man with the covenant mercy of his God, in a marvellous manner, and to a vast extent. But all these come short of that great, grand, and long-predicted manifestation of God which had been intimated at the begin-

ning, and which the whole course and tenor of holy writ united to adumbrate and explain,—the manifestation of the Son of God in human flesh. When, immediately after the fall, whilst Satan yet exulted in his victory, and hell revelled in triumph on beholding human nature stripped of its glory, torn from its high and holy alliance with heaven, covered with guilt and shame, trampled in the dust, and laid prostrate in chains, a captive under the power of the destroyer; who can adequately conceive the extent of wonder and astonishment couched under the single sentence uttered by the Divine Judge, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head?” The seed of the woman; the woman, who tempted and seduced her husband, and drew him with her into ruin; the woman, human nature in its loveliness and weakness, without the aid of her more vigorous and powerful partner, is to give forth the great Agent who is to destroy the power of the destroyer, to break the chains of hell, to abolish death, to lead captivity captive, and to work out a redemption so glorious, that humanity shall be raised to a higher excellence than that from which it was torn, and the glory of God and the good of man shall both be greatly enhanced, despite all the ravages of the tempter, and his success in his aggression on human happiness!

But how is this to be done? What is the secret of this almighty power, which is thus gloriously destined to deliver the guilty sinner, and to vanquish death and hell? It is here. The eternal Son of God is incarnated in human flesh! The seed of the woman embodies the Son of God! The “everlasting Father” stands before us, one person with the humble and lowly and suffering Jesus! This is the great, grand, crowning element of the mystery of godliness,—“God was manifested in the flesh.” It was to this point that all the types, rites, and doctrines of the preceding dispensations tended, as to a common centre. It was this that all prophecy taught in its highest flight of inspired poesy, and in its most grave revelations of sublime truth. “Immanuel, God with us,”—God in our nature. The Word is made flesh and dwells among us, showing forth his glory, and displaying to every seeking soul boundless grace and truth.

How full of wonder is the history of Jesus! What an amazing harmony of apparent impossibilities does it present to our view! Here we perceive a regular course of human progression, a constant manifestation of weakness and want, of suffering and sorrow, always attending his steps, until his earthly career is terminated in an ignominious death. Yet,

amid all this, you will perceive in his character a continual manifestation of unchangeable purity, boundless benevolence, Divine wisdom, and infinite power. To give all available proof of this, we should have to transcribe the gospel narratives. Do this for yourselves; trace the course of the peasant of Nazareth. You will see him hungry and thirsty, you will hear him say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." You will find him the butt of obloquy, the object of shame and contempt. Follow him to the end of his course, and you will find an unearthly load pressing on his mind, an agony and laceration of spirit which, if we regard him only as a man, is altogether inexplicable; for no guile was found in his lips, no remorse entered into his feeling: holy, unblameable, and separate from sinners, he had no internal cause for disquiet; yet the hour and power of darkness rested on his soul. But, notwithstanding, this man of sorrows, so crushed and bruised, stands out to our vision as invested with unlimited goodness, wisdom, and might, his word possesses creative power, wine is made, food created, the sick are healed, the maimed restored, eyes are given to the blind, even the dead are raised, winds and seas obey his voice, and devils tremble at his word; all displaying the omniscient wisdom and infinite power of God.

Allow me, my dear brethren, to urge on your prayerful attention this sublime subject. You profess to preach Christ: be sure that you know him. Make yourselves familiar with his character. Acquaint yourselves fully with the history of his life; enter into his views, his habits, and usual course of action. Trace his way from his cradle to his cross, and know his whole career. This knowledge is essential; it can be supplied by no other learning. General history is desirable; but it cannot supersede the knowledge of Christ. It is well for you to have some information respecting the great, the wise, and the good of every age; but if you possess all this, it will not supply the want of the knowledge of the Son of God. Whatever else you may attain or neglect, be quite at home in the scriptures, and especially in the Gospels. Read these with assiduous care, combine and compare their several portions of information into one whole; never, indeed, be satisfied without having a clear and distinct idea in your mind of the order and connexion of the principal occurrences of the Redeemer's life. Depend on it, the knowledge of Christ, in its strict and literal sense, is essential to an efficient preaching of Christ. More than this, study his character: do your utmost to pene-



trate his judgment and feeling, to apprehend the decisions of his mind ; study with especial care the style, manner, and subject-matter of his teaching. Remember that he was a Divine Teacher, and that the truth which fell from his lips we are to publish to the world. His teaching is to form the basis of ours. Let us, then, hear and study him as our model and pattern ; and whilst we are diligently labouring to diffuse his truth, he will still help and guide us by the energy and wisdom of his own Holy Spirit.

Important, however, as is a thorough knowledge of the life, character, works, and teaching of Christ, there is yet something beyond of transcendent importance to us as preachers of the gospel. We are, indeed, called to preach Christ : we must never forget this, never do it partially, but make him fully our theme and our subject. But this direction is not complete : we must take it in its extended form : "Preach Christ, and him crucified." Yes, "and him crucified." This is the culminating point of the gospel. Even the life, labours, miracles, and teaching of Christ, like the Old-Testament manifestations of his grace and power, are, to some extent, preliminary and preparatory to the grand crowning act of redeeming love. You have been already shown how fully and emphatically the redemption of man arises out of the blood-shedding, the actual atoning sacrifice, of the Lord Jesus.\* Receive this, not merely as a great doctrine, an important gospel maxim, but as the grand truth which is, more than any other, and above every other, to form the basis of gospel preaching. This is the case, regarding this truth simply in a doctrinal aspect. It exhibits, as nothing else can do, the vicarious atonement of the Son of God ; shows forth the great eternal reason for the pardon and justification of penitent sinners ; explains why a just and holy God can, in perfect consistency, justify the ungodly ; proves, indeed, that the justice of God can not only accede to this justifying process, but is bound to apply it. God is now "faithful and just, to forgive us our sins," because "he bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Our debt is thereby discharged, and "we are redeemed," not by the mere intervention of mercy, or the agency of any corruptible means, but by "the precious blood of Jesus." This, indeed, is in every respect the master truth of revelation : every doctrine of grace converges to this grand central point, the dying love and atoning blood of the Lord Jesus. We frequently hear it lamented, that preaching is not now so directly useful in the

\* Pages 266—269.

awakening of sinners, and in their conversion, as in former times. If there is any truth in this surmise, depend on it one reason is, that such preaching does not exhibit, as fully and as effectively as it should do, the blood of Christ as the world's ransom. See how this doctrine exhibits the evil of sin. No language you can employ, no figures that you can select, will show the terrible evil of sin, exhibit its intense virulence, and proclaim its infinite demerit, so effectively as when, in the language of the Holy Ghost, you show that it can be atoned for by nothing, be purged away by nothing, but the "blood of Christ." What can present to the mind the justice of God in such a terrible aspect as the simple unadorned fact, that to meet its demand on human guilt, no expiation would avail but the blood-shedding of God's dear Son? Would you portray to sinners the curse under which they live, and the damnation to which they are inevitably destined if they die in their sins? How can you do it so effectually, as to show that He, who could measure the punishment of eternal fire, who could gauge the agonizing torment which the undying worm can inflict, chose, rather than that man should endure these, to die himself, to suffer more than death, to bear the hour and power of darkness in Gethsemane, to endure the mocking and scourging in the judgment-hall, and even to be crucified on Calvary? O my brethren, with such a subject the marvel is, that sinners are not found crying for mercy under every sermon, and that we do not commonly find penitents translated from the Kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, under the word!

"Christ, and him crucified," must, therefore, be regarded, not simply in a doctrinal point of view, but as a truth which forms a means of bringing sinners to God through the agency of a preached gospel. It does this in two important respects:—

First, there is no other truth so adapted to affect and influence the human heart. Never forget that all the Divinely-appointed arrangements of the gospel are intended for effect. Its beauty and glory do not so much consist in their abstract and intrinsic excellence, as in their adaptation to rescue men from the power of the destroyer, and to prepare them for the bliss of heaven. The dying love of Jesus, his wondrous passion, his agonizing death, its truly vicarious character, his dying for, and in the stead of, the sinner,—these truths, fairly and fully enforced, are more than any other adapted to affect the human mind, and to lead it to serious thought and concern. We have a striking instance of this in the case of the Danish missionaries to

Greenland : they laboured many years without success ; saw, in fact, no fruit of their labour. They had been, as they thought, teaching and preparing the people for the gospel, until, dispirited, they were about to abandon the work in despair ; and, as a last resource before doing so, they preached on the dying love of Jesus, when some of those poor benighted Heathen were deeply affected, and were soon afterward brought to God. One of these subsequently expressed the various feelings of his mind under the preaching to which he had listened : “ They first came and told us to worship God, and showed the folly of any other worship : and I thought, We are not so foolish as he takes us to be. They then told us not to steal, or lie, or swear, but to be honest and sober ; and I said, ‘ Teach all this to your countrymen, who come frequently to visit us.’ At length they said that Jesus Christ loved us, loved us so well as to die for us ; that he actually had died to save us poor, ignorant, miserable wretches. When I heard that, I felt as I never felt before. My heart seemed as if it would burst, and I thought I must love Him who had loved, and suffered, and died for me.” This, my brethren, is not an exception. It is the rule ; and wherever human nature is found, it will be accessible to this influence. The arrangements of the gospel are found in perfect adaptation to the constitution of the human mind, and this master-truth will be always more likely to be effective than any other means. Let me exhort you, therefore, to preach Christ crucified.

Secondly. This truth, in a respect beyond any other, is likely to secure the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit. It was, emphatically, by his death that the Saviour obtained the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is “ redemption through his blood ” that is the burden of our message. It is faith in his blood which saves the soul. When, therefore, we clearly, fully, distinctly, and earnestly proclaim the passion and death of Christ for the sins of the world, and the salvation of man, we bring ourselves and our hearers into contact with the great appointed means of the world’s redemption. We use that agency which God has specially appointed as the means of saving men, and we may therefore fully expect, and, indeed, humbly and reverently, but in the full assurance of faith, claim, the promised presence and powerful operation of the Holy Ghost.

Bear with me, my brethren, if I urge this point with more than ordinary earnestness. Are we not in danger of losing sight of the grand prominence given in the word of God to the



blood-shedding and atonement of Christ? I fear we are. I lament to say that beautiful sermons are often delivered, in which there is little of Christ, and less of his atonement. I fear, in some quarters, it is regarded as due to the progress of knowledge, to the advancing intelligence of the age, to say less about these great gospel topics now than formerly. Beware of this fearful delusion. The more the intellect is cultivated, the less Christ may be esteemed; but certainly he is not needed less. The errors and failings of the ancient Jews and Greeks are even now abundantly represented amongst us. To the self-righteous, the cross of Christ has always been a "stumbling-block," and by the self-conceited it has constantly been regarded as "foolishness." But did these things induce the great apostle to lay aside the cross? to cease to mention the cross? On the contrary, he gloried in the cross; he exulted beyond measure in it, because "to them that believe" it is "the wisdom of God and the power of God." It will always be so. Let us then preach Christ and him crucified, through good report and evil report, and our labour will not be in vain in the Lord.

I have now to direct your serious attention to the object and end of preaching. For what purpose do we preach? Let us fairly and fully discuss this question. Is it to display our ability, to show the variety of our knowledge, and the extent of our intellectual power? Do not be so much offended or surprised at the inquiry, as to refuse to entertain it. There is nothing contrary to the well-known character of human nature in the assumption. Does any man affect to deny, or to doubt, that men have entered on this sacred work, under the influence of such motives? Why, then, should we refuse to carry the faithful inquiry into our own hearts? We have most of us studied at least some subjects more than the ordinary run of mankind. We are conscious to ourselves of a certain vigour of mind—a mental energy, which, in our sober judgment, we do not think every one around us possesses. We are sensible that we have a power of utterance, a command of language, beyond the ordinary average of our neighbours. Is it, then, for the sake of exercising these gifts, or of manifesting them, that we enter upon the work of preaching? Much of what may at first sight seem strange in this inquiry will disappear when I remind you, that, in many localities, preaching is the only available means for the exercise of such powers and acquirements as those to which I have referred. In some places there are debating societies, and opportunities for the delivery of lectures, which

open a way for the exercise and display of these gifts ; but in numerous other districts there is nothing of the kind : preaching alone presents the necessary opening. Believe me, my brethren, there is danger in this direction. And if the case was of sufficient magnitude to induce the great apostle to clear himself and companions of all suspicion on this head, by the strong assertion, " We preach not ourselves," we should carefully and diligently follow his example, and constantly exercise a godly jealousy over our hearts, lest we are led astray by their vanity or deceitfulness. Perhaps, however, after full investigation, you can humbly and thankfully praise God that you have fully escaped this snare, that this influence has nothing to do with your motives in preaching. Be thankful ; but do not regard the inquiry as closed.

Do you preach, then, for the purpose of disseminating any particular sentiments, opinions, or doctrines ? You are well aware that this has often been done, and is perfectly natural to the human mind. Men are attracted by certain views and opinions. They study them with care, and diligently examine their character, relation, and importance ; and throughout this whole process they take a deeper interest, and feel a greater delight in the subject, until at length silence respecting these favourite topics becomes almost insupportable. They must talk about them, and cannot rest unless others are persuaded also to receive and adopt them. Is it for this that we preach ? We have, indeed, favourite views and opinions ; they have taken fast hold of our judgment and our heart ; we delight in them. Is it, then, merely for the dissemination of our sentiments and doctrines that we preach ? Does the reception of our views and opinions by our hearers satisfy us ? Do we call this success ? Very probably you can conscientiously say, that this is not your case, that you aim at other and higher objects. Let me, then, ask you once more, whether this higher and better object is simply the instruction and moral elevation of your fellow-men ?

Do you preach to dispel ignorance, and to raise your hearers in the scale of mind and of morals ? You will bear in mind that these are no mean or unworthy objects : some of the greatest men that ever lived have spent their energy and their life to promote them. Does this fully meet your case ? Can you be content with such a definition of your motive and object in preaching ? If we are at liberty to form an opinion of the motive and end of a preacher from the subject and matter of his preaching, we should be compelled to come to the conclusion that this does precisely meet the case of many among us.

Judging from all we see and hear, they contemplate no higher object, and look for no greater success, than the instruction of the mind, and the elevation of the morals, of their hearers. If, unhappily, these things are so, we need not wonder at the low state of religion and the extreme paucity of conversions. Men seldom execute more than they aim at, or secure more than they seek. It is the character of human effort to come rather short of our object, for our arrow to fall between us and the mark. If, then, our aims, and object, and hope, are altogether beneath the blessedness of gospel salvation, and the command and promise of our Lord, surely we are not likely to do his will, to comply with his requirement, and, consequently, to secure the blessing which he has promised on our labours.

For the sake of perspicuity and distinctness, I have put these cases fully before you. But it is necessary, ere we pass on, to observe that we are scarcely ever actuated by perfectly simple motives. We usually move under the influence of combined agencies. We may therefore possibly be affected by two or more of these motives in combination. Or, even if higher, more correct, and holier desires operate on our minds, these which I have now mentioned may sometimes intrude, and adulterate our feelings and views by their influence. Let me beg, therefore, that you most carefully form your views of the object and end of preaching. Do your utmost to analyze your feelings, to ascertain your exact motive and object in this holy work. I cannot say that in this respect motive is every thing; for with the purest desire and intention there may be other defects, which may mar our efforts, and cause our labour to fail. But, certainly, without a just apprehension of the proper object and end of preaching, and the utmost purity of motive in our efforts, we shall, to a great extent at least, labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought.

Do you ask me, then, to state clearly and distinctly what this proper object and end of preaching really is? I reply briefly, It is the conversion of sinners to God, and then the leading of them on to the attainment of full salvation.

It will be necessary to expand and amplify this reply. We tread in the steps of our Divine Master. We go forth to seek and to save them that are lost. Observe, *that are lost*. There are men who may consistently labour to educate and improve human nature. We cannot. The very basis of our call to this work is the fact, that human nature is not merely defective, and imperfect, and needs improvement, but that it is utterly ruined and lost. "Every mouth is stopped, and all the world



is become guilty before God." "The carnal mind is enmity against God." (Rom. iii. 19; viii. 7.) Man is totally depraved, guilty, and condemned. Mere improvement does not meet his case. You may as reasonably talk of improving the health of a corpse. Man is spiritually dead; and this spiritual death must be distinctly, fully, and continually recognised; and all our efforts, plans, and discourses must be poised against this entire spiritual ruin and moral death.

The first object and end of preaching, then, is to effect the conversion of these lost, condemned, and ruined souls. But how is this to be done? This question calls up another: What is the mission with which we are charged? It is pardon for the guilty, life for the dead, purity for the depraved; and all this absolutely and entirely irrespective of measure or degree. We are not taught to scrutinize the extent of human guilt—to gauge the depths of moral corruption and depravity. We are charged with a message of mercy for every guilty man, with an offer of spiritual life for every dead soul, with the grace of entire sanctification for every depraved mind.

Our first effort must, then, be directed to produce, in those who hear us, a deep conviction of their lost and ruined condition through sin. To this important work we must address ourselves, to this duty we must devote our efforts, with fidelity and zeal. Do not, however, so far misunderstand me as to suppose that I advise the use of violent or harsh terms, or any offensiveness of manner, in these efforts to bring sinners to a knowledge of their true spiritual condition. Let the recollection that in describing their state we are portraying that which was formerly our own, always chasten our feeling and our language. In showing the extent of their misery and ruin, we are only exhibiting the hole of the pit from which we ourselves have been but recently extricated. Let all our descriptions, warnings, and assertions, whilst faithful and true, exhibiting without adulteration the mind of the Spirit, and the true scriptural doctrine, be always deeply, richly imbued with the gentleness, tenderness, sympathy, and love which Christ always evinced toward sinners even of the foulest character. This is, then, the first thing at which we are to aim,—to get all the unconverted who hear us to have a clear view of their spiritual death and entire guiltiness before God, and the condemnation and danger to which they are exposed in consequence of this sinful and guilty condition.

If we are favoured with success in this effort, as we shall assuredly be, it will be important to give the mind of the

awakened sinner a right direction. It is not always that this is done ; and, consequently, a man is sometimes brought to see his misery and ruin, but then the convicted and condemned soul sees no way of escape or deliverance, and consequently sinks into the apathy and agony of despair. We must do our utmost to prevent this ; and the means to be adopted are very evident. The mind of the sinner must be turned away from his sin, as the great cause of all his sorrow and danger, and be turned toward Christ, as his only hope of mercy and deliverance. This is, perhaps, as correct a view of evangelical repentance as we can give. The first thing, then, is to persuade the sinner to renounce his sins. Sin of every kind, no matter how pleasing, or apparently profitable,—all sin must be renounced, must be abandoned. The awakened mind, under the teaching of the word, and the guidance of the Spirit, must learn to loathe and detest itself, to regard it as “the evil and bitter thing ;” must have this strong feeling confirmed and fastened on the mind for this combined reason,—that it is hateful to God, and ruinous to man. But at the same time that the awakened sinner is exhorted and persuaded to renounce his sins, he must be urged to fly to Christ. A very prevalent and fatal error is, that we are prone to endeavour to do these things in succession, which it is only possible for us to effect simultaneously. The penitent usually endeavours first to get the mastery over sin, under the impression that he will then be able more easily to come to Christ. We say this is impossible ; for Christ is our only deliverance from sin. It is, therefore, only as we fly to him that we acquire the power to renounce the evil. “He shall save his people from their sins,” is the word of the promise. Let us keep this truth steadily before our hearers, and urge on them its practical observance. Turning from sin to Christ may be regarded as the first step actually taken in the way of salvation.

Our next duty will be to encourage the penitent to believe on Jesus Christ with his heart unto righteousness. A grave question arises here, which I cannot answer. It is this : Why are so few penitents brought into the liberty of the gospel under the word now, in comparison of the number so saved by faith in the early days of Methodism ? Is it that we have in any measure departed from the plainness, simplicity, or truth of the gospel ? Is it that we do not preach this important truth so prominently as our predecessors did ? that we assume it to be so well known as not to need continual exposition and application ? Or do we possess less of the holy unction and

spiritual power than our predecessors? Whatever may be the cause, the fact will scarcely be doubted by any one well acquainted with Wesleyan history. I am inclined to think that, although we may sometimes assume our hearers to be better informed than they really are, a more general fault of preachers at the present day is to place the truth simply before the people, without urging it upon their immediate acceptance. Do we not, especially in respect of this particular, lack earnestness, entreaty, persuasion? Preaching a present salvation implies something more than a mere declaration of truth. We must urge it on the acceptance of our hearers by every means in our power. And in regard to the leading of penitent spirits to the enjoyment of pardoning mercy, these efforts should be specially employed; and, in order to success here, we must speak under a rich baptism of the Holy Ghost. These matters can only be spiritually discerned and spiritually applied. O my brethren, let us labour to live in the Spirit, to preach in the Spirit; let us set our hearts on leading sinners to Christ, and we shall, to some extent at least, succeed.

We may assume the existence of this success, and of its fruits; for there are found in every congregation those who have been thus awakened, convinced, and led to the experience of pardoning mercy. We must recognise the existence of this class of persons in our preaching. Their spiritual requirements, and nurture, and advancement in holiness, spread before us a wide and important field of labour. Here, indeed, we have the church, and, however important it may be to enlarge it by the conversion of sinners, it is equally so to preserve these sheep from the power of the destroyer, and to lead them on to the experience of all that blessing to which they are called in Christ Jesus.

The first branch of this duty respects the defence and protection of these converted souls. You are well aware, from your own individual experience, of the danger to which they are exposed. From within, the unsanctified remains of carnal nature assail them; from without, the fearful and potent influence of the world stands arrayed against them; whilst all the energy, guile, and unceasing vigilance of Satan's hosts are directed alike to internal and external foes, being always ready to render to every other agency additional power, and to peril in every way the stability of the Christian. We have to consider this existing state of things in relation to all the changes, circumstances, and vicissitudes of life. The alternations of sickness and health, of poverty and prosperity, of ignorance and



education, with every other change and influence which affects mankind, must fully come under our consideration. Having all this before us, we have to minister the truth of God to the edification of the church of Christ. Never imagine that, because you have clearly explained a portion of Divine truth, and shown its force and beauty, you have done your duty. Have the sheep been fed? Has the word been adapted to their circumstances and condition? The administration of the gospel is emphatically an utilitarian process. It is a means to an end, and we must see that the end is accomplished. In this important work, what constant need exists for a deep and serious consideration of our weighty responsibility! How many, who, being converted to God, turn back again to the beggarly elements of the world! how many, who begin in the Spirit, make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience! We know all this, we deeply lament it; but do we seriously inquire whether some of this sinful backsliding is not fairly chargeable on our neglect or deficiency? Forgive me if I over-estimate our position; but in this respect I think we occupy one of unparalleled advantage. The duties and various occupations of ministers necessarily, and in despite of their utmost efforts, separate them to some extent from the people; they can but seldom enter into their every-day life, as fully as they desire to do. But that which they can but partially attain is thrust upon us. We, in our different spheres of action, are identified with those to whom we preach; we know their cases, participate in their anxieties, are exposed to the same vicissitudes as they. Do we rightly improve these advantages to their edification? Believe me, this subject presses with great weight upon my spirit; and, if I may express my deep and settled conviction, I should say, we ought, and must, more zealously and spiritually labour to feed and defend the church of Christ by his holy truth.

But this is not all. We, indeed, too frequently speak and act as if, to ward-off the enemy, and to maintain our position, is success. But, in truth, it is not so. The law of the spiritual life, as of all other life, is progress. You know how emphatically we are taught in the word of God to grow in grace, and to rise from babes to young men, and from young men to become fathers in Israel. We have, in previous discourses, considered not only the duty of growing in grace, but also the privilege of having the last remains of sin destroyed out of the soul, the heart being fully sanctified and filled with the pure and perfect love of

God. We have been taught, by our good old Wesleyan theology, to aspire after this as our undoubted privilege, and not to rest until we rejoice in this full salvation. Would to God that we more generally and more fully complied with these glorious invitations! However this may be, those of our hearers who are really alive to God, and are growing in grace, have a right to expect that those who preach the gospel to them from Wesleyan pulpits shall declare, maintain, and fully offer unto them this great salvation. Of all the fearful results of human frailty which are presented to our view in the history of the church of Christ, the most terrible is, that, when those whom God has called to preach his word, weaken, soften, adulterate that truth on account of their own low spiritual condition. My dear brethren, let us guard against this, by living very near to God. And let us offer to our hearers not only a free and a present, but also a full, salvation. How blessed is the dissemination of this truth and holiness! Let me beseech you so to live, that you may be able to make this topic prominent, and, whilst teaching holiness of heart and life, sing, as in my youthful days I have so often heard that blessed and useful servant of Christ, Mr. William Carvosso, sing:—

“The mercy I feel, to others I show;  
I set to my seal, that Jesus is true.”

Before I dismiss this part of our subject, let me again remind you, that the true and proper object and end of preaching is the conversion of souls, and their nurture and growth in holiness. Do not be satisfied with any sermon which does not in some degree subserve this purpose. Leave the pulpit always prepared to meet every individual member of your congregation at the bar of God; assured that your declaration of the gospel plan, and your offer of salvation, had left each of them without excuse. A circumstance which took place about thirty years ago impresses this on my mind with more than usual force. I had been preaching on a sabbath evening in one of our village chapels, and was returning home in company with a member of the Society there, when he said, “You had rather a strange hearer in the congregation to-night.” I asked what he meant. “Why,” he said, “a man has returned to the village in rather ill health. He was born here, and left when quite a boy, and has been to sea all his life. I have been talking to him during the week, and was shocked to hear him say, that he did not remember that he had ever heard a sermon. I pressed him very much to come to chapel, and he was there this evening.” I felt some interest in this person, and asked some questions

respecting him. We had, however, soon to separate, and I went home. A short time afterward I met the same friend; when he said, "Do you remember the sailor who heard you preach the other evening, and who had never heard a sermon before?" "O yes," I said, "very well, and feel quite interested in him." "Well," he replied, "he never heard another sermon. Before the next sabbath he became very ill, and in a few days he sunk rapidly and died."

I shall never forget this case. Here was a man for whose soul no one had cared. In a Christian country, in a land of Bibles, privileges, and religious opportunities; and yet, as far as we know, the only means he ever had of coming to the knowledge of Christ and of his salvation through a preached gospel, had hinged on one of my sermons. What a terrible thought! I might have spent the hour in discussing some curious historical circumstance, or in carefully exhibiting a particular doctrine, in dilating on some peculiar principle in morals,—while before me was a man who had never before sat under the word of God, and who was never again so to sit. O my great and gracious God, help us to be faithful! I believe that, on the occasion referred to, I did preach an earnest gospel sermon; but from that day to this, I have never lost my fear lest I should not have been plain, explicit, and earnest enough, to meet the requirements of that man. And why should we think this instance so very peculiar? It may be seldom that those hear us who never heard a sermon before; but it cannot be an uncommon case for persons to hear us preach their last sermon, and to go from our word to the presence of their God. O my brethren, let us pray that the Lord may help us to be faithful!

But I shall probably be reminded, that this whole work involves superhuman achievements; that mere man cannot enlighten the dark mind of the sinner, cannot turn him from his sins unto Christ, cannot give him power to believe in Christ, nor save him from the danger to which he is exposed, and build him up in holiness; that these results can only be effected by the Spirit of God. How, then, are we to expect them, as the effects of our preaching? Most certainly we are. And for this reason: every one who is truly called of God to preach his truth receives also the universal promise of the Saviour, "Lo, I am with you alway;" and if such persons maintain the life and power of religion in their own hearts, and go forth to preach the gospel in humble and faithful dependence upon the promised blessing of power from on high, they will, in a certain



measure and degree, receive it, so that the truth will come to their hearers not in word only, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. We may at one time be less sensible of the presence of this blessing than at others ; and the manifestation of this Divine gift, although perhaps mainly dependent on our purity and faith, is nevertheless communicated not according to our will, but as the mind of the Spirit may direct ; and painful spiritual exercise is therefore not unfrequent, even in the case of the most pious and favoured of preachers. Yet, notwithstanding all these fluctuations of blessing and of feeling, the grand fact must still be recognised,—the gospel can only be preached efficiently when it is preached under the influence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. So clear is this fact, that we fearlessly say, that the man who does not look for this Divine aid, who does not trust in its guidance and strength, and actually realize its presence, *ought never to have undertaken the office of preacher*. Such an one attempts an impossibility. He attempts to perform the work of God with the strength of a man. This, as you all know, is directly opposed to the Divine teaching, which says, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Let me iterate on your minds the conclusion to which we are led : The true object and end of preaching is the conversion of souls, and their perfection in holiness. This work is essentially the work of the Holy Spirit, as given by our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet it has pleased the Head of the church to herald forth his merciful message, by men who have found mercy : they are called to be “workers together with him” in this glorious enterprise. Let us humbly, zealously, perseveringly pursue our way, and hope to realize a rich harvest of souls. But what language can describe the case of the man who, ungrateful for being called into this glorious association with God, actually discards his heavenly Helper, and dares to undertake the whole work in his own unaided power ? Such insolent and profane effrontery is matchless. No, my dear brethren, let us maintain this blessed union, exert every energy we possess, and at the same time look only to the grace of the Holy Ghost for every hope of success.

We have now to consider the best manner of preaching. Under this head we shall have to speak of these three things : First, the matter which our discourses are to contain ; secondly, the manner in which they are to be arranged ; and, thirdly, the way in which they are to be delivered.

First, then, *the matter* of which our sermons are to be composed.

On this head we could easily give a very short direction, by saying, that we are to preach the gospel, the word of God, or, to use the exact language of our Saviour, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) We are not, however, to understand from this, that a mere recital of scripture truth, even though it be in the exact words of Christ, is preaching. The appointment of gospel preaching evidently contemplated more than this. It comprises these two elements at least: the substance of gospel truth obtained from the scriptures, and the human thought and feeling through which, as a medium, this truth passes to the mind of the hearer. These two things are therefore to be combined in the subject matter of every discourse. But how is this to be done? Under what rules, regulations, or directions? It is by no means an easy task to lay down general rules for the guidance of the young preacher in this respect: this has been attempted much oftener than it has succeeded. Nor do we think that any extended rules can be devised, which will suit all the various classes and varieties of human mind which the great Head of the church has called into his service. All that we shall attempt, therefore, on this head is to give two or three very general directions.

We incline to think that, in every sermon or religious discourse delivered for the spiritual enlightenment and edification of the people, there should be some distinct assertion of scripture truth, accompanied by an explanation of its meaning. Although reciting scripture does not constitute preaching, there can be no preaching without holy scripture. This is the basis of all our communications in the name of Christ. We are not called merely to state our own thoughts, opinions, and judgment, but the truth of God. This is the great foundation matter of all we have to say, and every address ought very clearly and distinctly to bring some complete portion of this Divine truth before the mind of the people.

But the word of God is not only to be asserted, it must be explained. This is a most important part of our duty. We have to the utmost of our power to convey to the people *the mind of the Spirit*. In no respect does a weightier responsibility rest upon us than here. We have to tell people, (a large proportion of whom will not read and search for themselves,) what is the will of God concerning them. From our lips they take their views of his law, the promises of grace, the great plan

of redeeming mercy in Christ Jesus. Now if this mode of communicating Divine truth to man through human beings divinely called to this work, and which was mercifully designed perpetually to imbue the message of mercy, which God sends to the human family, with sanctified human thought, feeling, and sympathy, throughout all time, be the means, through our neglect or unfaithfulness, of adulterating or corrupting this truth, the consequences must be fearful beyond all conception. We should, therefore, take the utmost care, that all our explanations of the word of God are sound, judicious, and correct. Comparing scripture with scripture, and never making one portion of the word of God contradict another portion, looking steadily and faithfully to him for the illumination of his Holy Spirit, we shall be able to "utter by the tongue words easy to be understood," and shall thus lead those who hear us to a correct acquaintance with the Divine will.

The explanation of the portions of scripture which we select for the basis of our discourses, will be twofold; the first respecting the subject, the second referring to the terms in which this is put forth. There are many passages of holy writ which will only require exposition respecting one of these kinds; some will be found to occur in which both will be required. We may instance, as belonging to the first class, that text so frequently preached from, Heb. ii. 3: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" There is no word here of any difficult or uncertain meaning. "Escape," "neglect," "salvation," are words with whose sense we are perfectly familiar. In respect of terms we have, consequently, here no exposition required. But in regard of the subject, important explanation is essential. The peculiar nature and true greatness of this salvation must be clearly and fully exhibited; what, in respect of such a great deliverance, constitutes "neglect" should also be ascertained, and the vast importance and appointed means of "escape" must be clearly declared. A vast number of important portions of scripture follow the same rule, the explanation required referring entirely to the subject matter of which they speak. In those cases the context will generally afford considerable aid: this, and parallel passages, together with any other that can be thought of, as being of nearly similar import, should be carefully consulted and compared; and the best judgment formed of the sense of the text from this elaborate and extended examination.

The words, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able,"



(Luke xiii. 24,) afford an example of that class of texts, the exposition of which mainly depends on the explanation of its terms. What is the true idea presented to the mind by the word "strive," or, as the original term might have been rendered, "agonize?" It clearly means the most vigorous, persevering, and self-denying effort. The "strait gate" exhibits the narrow and strictly-defined way of the Divine law; while "seeking" plainly exhibits those convictions, desires, and efforts which, not being sufficient to produce godly repentance and faith in Christ, fail to conduct the sinner into the way of salvation. They are therefore "not able," because they do not "strive." In a text like this, except these words are clearly and fully explained, the teaching of the scripture cannot be adequately presented to the mind, or brought effectively to bear on the conscience.

I will give an instance of one of those texts which require both kinds of explanation: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 15.) Here are some words which will require explanation to make their meaning clear to the apprehension of an ordinary congregation. "Bondage," and especially "adoption," are of this number. We have in our social institutions nothing like the practice of adoption as it has always existed in the East. The statement, that in those countries it has been usual for a person of dignity and wealth to select fine children, and, by what is called "adoption," to introduce them into his family and rear them up as his own, will sufficiently explain the meaning of the word. But when this is done, little is accomplished in respect of the explanation of the passage. It will also be necessary to show the state of religious debasement and subjection to Satan, which is here described as the "spirit of bondage unto fear," and also that glorious gospel privilege which is here represented as conferred by the gift of "the Spirit of adoption." These explanations, united, give forth the whole sense of this important text, and lay the foundation for useful, practical application.

I have only thought it necessary just to indicate the points to which our explanations ought to be directed in preaching; but do not imagine on this account, that this is a matter of little consequence. On the contrary, nothing is of more vital importance to the proper prosecution of our work. We must give the people the word of God, and we must give it them as the inspired servant of God gave it in his preaching: he "read in

the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." (Neh. viii. 6—8) Minute directions as to how this is to be done will avail but little. There is so much difference in our gifts, and even in the temperament and character of our minds, that each will be best able to do his work in his own way; only let us have, and carefully maintain, a clear view of our object and aim, and of the means by which these are to be secured. And, let me repeat, that one of the most important of these means is the giving the people freely and fully the sense and meaning of the word of God.

We must, however, do more than this. It is not sufficient, for effective preaching, to select a portion of holy writ, and give its sense and meaning: this sense must be confirmed and enforced by other portions of Scripture. This is also a principal part of our duty, and should occupy no small portion of our attention. Confining ourselves to our text deprives us of an amazing power which may be brought to bear on those who hear us, as well as of a means of investing our discourses with considerable interest and variety.

The manner in which this part of our work is to be done, will greatly depend on the nature of the subject. If, for instance, the text be doctrinal, the doctrine will require not only to be clearly explained, and rendered plain to hearers of the most moderate capacity; it must also be supported by scriptural authority. This can frequently be most effectively done, by dealing with known popular objections to, or corruptions of, the doctrine, and showing that they are contradicted and opposed to implicit scriptural truth. This being done, we may proceed to support the sense given of the doctrine of the text, by positive proof, drawn from other parts of the sacred scriptures. Although we have thought it right to mention both these modes of confirming the statement of doctrinal truth, as they are really important means of communicating the Divine will, we cannot help cautioning the young preacher as to the use of the first part. In stating objections or errors in respect of any doctrine, great care should be taken that the answer be clear, complete, and fully sustained by scripture. We have known instances in which the error has been stated with much greater force than the truth has been in the reply; so that the tendency of the discourse has been rather to lead people astray than to recover them. Let this be carefully avoided, by all means.

In all practical points, the Bible affords the preacher a vast range of means for confirmation and illustration; but all these may be reduced to three classes,—precepts, commendations, and

promises, with their opposites. A word may be necessary in respect of each of these.

Precepts, or prohibitions, may be referred to, according to the nature of the subject; and not unfrequently both may be used. And here it may be observed, that judgment and taste are required in selecting confirmations most suitable to the subject. As, for instance, if you are preaching from such a text as, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" the reasonableness, importance, and duty of complying with this gracious invitation will be best enforced by reference to those precepts or prohibitions which set forth the mercy, condescension, pity, compassion, and love of God: whilst, if your text be, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men," it should be confirmed and enforced by a class of scriptures which set forth God's hatred of sin, and his purity, justice, power, and wrath.

With respect to commendations or dispraise: You should remember that the commendation of any state of mind, or course of action, is virtually a condemnation of the opposite; and so in respect of dispraise: when a vice or evil is condemned or censured, its opposite virtue is really recommended. Scriptures of this class afford the preacher considerable aid, and especially in respect of that essential part of our duty, the *persuasion* of our hearers. The commendation or censure of God may be so exhibited as to have a very salutary effect upon the consciences of those who hear us.

Promises and threatenings are equally important means of confirming and enforcing scriptural truth and duty; as rewards and punishments are the great means by which laws are enforced; and the obligation to obedience, and the danger of transgression, are to be fully exhibited. The distinct assertion of the Divine will, in promises or threatenings, affords the most weighty motives which can be presented to the human mind. It is scarcely possible to conceive of a more wondrous magazine of powerful motives, than is here placed in our hands, as a means of effecting the great object at which we aim. God has graciously promised all that his infinite love and mercy can give, or that we can hope; and has threatened all that his almighty power can inflict, or that man can possibly dread; and has placed the record in our hands, that, knowing the abounding mercy and fearful terrors of the Lord, we may persuade men.

We prefer to urge on you the proper use of scripture, rather than the efforts of reason, as the subject matter of your pulpit



discourses. But there are weighty and obvious arguments which reason supplies in confirmation of our expositions of holy scripture, to which your attention ought to be directed. We will mention two or three of these.

1. No truth can possibly be more evident to the human mind, than that it is the *duty of all* to abandon the course of sin which our preaching condemns, and to pursue that course of righteousness and holiness to which we invite mankind. A powerful use may be made of this argument. We can never too frequently or too earnestly press it with all its force of conviction on the consciences of those who hear us.

2. A similarly obvious and weighty argument is found in the undoubted fact, that it is equally our *interest* to fly from sin, and live to God. The ruinous consequences of transgression are notorious even to sinners. The advantages of piety are patent to the world. Vice and wickedness are equally proofs of folly and of depravity. The way of holiness is the way of wisdom. We should not lose sight of this, in our pulpit reasonings, exhortations, and appeals.

3. We may add to these the general testimony of *experience*. Ask the serious and thoughtful of every age or nation, inquire the opinion of men of observation every where, and you will find it in direct accordance with the teaching of the sacred record, that "the way of transgressors is hard;" whilst of real religion it may always be said, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

We have now to notice the third element or portion pertaining to the subject matter of a sermon: it is APPLICATION. We are not now speaking of the manner, but of the matter, of a sermon. And here we feel anxious to urge on your attention the importance of giving your discourses that practical application to your hearers which alone can render your addresses successful. You have sometimes heard a preacher, when within five minutes of the close of his sermon, speak of the *improvement* which is to be made of the subject. What does this mean? Is it intended to intimate that the speaker has occupied forty minutes uselessly, and is about to redeem the remaining five? Do not fall into this error. You select a portion of the word of God as a text, and open its sense and scope clearly, and explain it fully; you then confirm and enforce it by other evidence from scripture and reason; but are you to throw this indiscriminately before your congregation? Certainly not. You do not speak for the purpose of exhibiting and defending the truth, but to save souls. The

most lucid and powerful exhibition of truth, illustrated and confirmed even by scripture and reason, will, in a great measure, fall powerless to the ground, unless it be earnestly, wisely, and zealously applied. Take, for instance, any doctrinal or practical truth, and you will find that generally it requires to be urged on the rich in a different way, and by other arguments, than those with which you urge it on the poor. The same remark is true in regard of the young and old, the learned and illiterate, the pious and profane, ordinary sinners and backsliders, and the half-hearted professors and earnest Christians. All these distinctions, and many others, must be recognised; and your mind must be engaged to provide for each and every class "a portion of meat in due season." You should always bear in mind, that the people are the object at which you aim; your soul is set on *saving* them. Sinners and backsliders hear you. They are condemned and ruined: you must select the right kind of truth, and present it to them in a way most likely to produce "repentance unto life." Luke-warm professors sit under your word: they should have truth sounded in their ears adapted to rouse them to diligence, and to quicken them in the way. Believers will often need reproof and consolation, and earnest Christians will want direction and encouragement, that each of them may attain "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

You cannot reasonably hope that these great ends will be secured by mere accident. I fear, some preachers in the present day have fallen into the fearful delusion of supposing that what they preach is necessarily the gospel; and that, if those who hear them are not saved, they ought to be, and are, consequently, left without excuse. I say, so far as we are concerned, this is a delusion. I do not pretend to say, how far those who hear us are left without excuse: I fear, indeed, that, perhaps in most cases, if they die in their sins, their blood will be found on their own head. But another and very serious question arises in respect of us: Do we improve our talent, which is given us for the salvation of souls? Have we, by diligence, and prayer, and devoted zeal, added to it another talent? Depend on it, the point on which we are now speaking demands our utmost energy: adapt, apply your discourses to your hearers. A quaint brother has said, "A sermon without application is like a letter well written, but put into the post-office without being directed, and consequently never likely to benefit the person for whom it was intended." Avoid this; apply the truth to the consciences of your hearers in the fear of

God, and you will not labour in vain. As we are not now speaking of the composition of a sermon, but of the matter which it contains, you will readily perceive, that by this application I do not mean any particular part of the discourse, such as the closing paragraph, which is frequently called "the application," but rather the direction and adaptation of the whole. In the sense in which I here speak, application should imbue the whole discourse, beginning, middle, and end. In asserting, explaining, and confirming the truth, it should be directed to the hearts of your hearers, and applied to their consciences.

We have now to direct attention to *the manner* in which this important collection of Divine truth is to be arranged in our discourses.

In the first place, it will be necessary to offer a word or two on the selection of suitable texts. And here I would say, first, never choose such texts as have not a complete sense, and even the complete sense of the writer. It is very possible to select a few words which may be sufficient to convey a sense; but, if that be not the sense of the inspired writer, we cannot consistently put it forth as Divine truth. If we take words out of their connexion, and invest them with a meaning not intended by the Holy Ghost, do we not preach ourselves, and not the gospel? Avoid, therefore, the error made some years since by an eminent divine, who, when preaching before royalty, read for his text, "Hear the church;" and thus exhibited the words as conveying a Divine command, although nothing is more clear than that, as uttered by our Saviour, they were not intended to bear any such meaning. (Matt. xviii. 15—17.)

Earnest advices have been given to avoid taking too little or too much scripture as a text. And certainly we may err either way: but I incline to think we more frequently err by taking too little than too much. It must, indeed, be freely admitted, that there is such a depth and fulness in the word of God, that frequently a very few words will present to the mind a subject not only amply sufficient for a sermon, but even much more than can be comprised in one discourse. This, however, is not always the case; nor, indeed, if it were, are we always able to see our way to all the wide range and vast depth of these treasures of truth; and, failing this, we are led to present more of the human mind, and less of the mind of the Spirit, in our discourses than is suitable or proper.

Having thus introduced the manner of preaching, before proceeding it may be necessary to observe, that nothing is further from my purpose than the laying down of rules for the



composition of a sermon. I might give many reasons why I think this undesirable; but I prefer at once candidly to say, that I do not know any such rules, and cannot pretend to teach them. It is my settled and firm conviction, that every person who is called of God to this work will have a way and manner of his own in the communication of Divine truth to his hearers. All that I shall attempt, and, indeed, all that I think necessary, is, to give a few advices applicable to preachers generally, and which all may use in their own way.

What I have already said respecting the selection of a portion of scripture, containing, in its connexion and in the meaning of the inspired writer, a complete sense, implies that this sense is clearly apprehended. This is, of course, essential. It not unfrequently happens that a text which greatly impresses the mind, and appears very desirable as the basis of a religious discourse, presents, when closely examined, some points of doubt and uncertainty. I would never advise a young preacher, in such a case, to attempt to preach from it. Carefully read the connexion; look diligently at any passages of a similar kind; but, above all, study all the bearings of the text, with fervent and earnest prayer to God. I do not undervalue commentaries and annotations; I highly esteem and greatly value many that I possess: but I must say that servile reliance should not be placed on any. A devout and earnest comparison of scripture with scripture will generally clear up the meaning; but when it does not, it will be our wisdom to make a note of our views and difficulty, and to let the subject rest, until, by some friendly counsel, or some further light, we are enabled clearly to apprehend the full intent of the text.

When a text is selected, and its meaning distinctly seen, we have to decide on the manner in which we shall form our discourse. And here, generally, I think, we shall find two things claiming our careful attention. First, our discourse, although it may touch on many topics, and contain various doctrinal and practical matters, ought to have some definite object or aim, which as a ruling idea shall pervade it from beginning to end, and to which every part shall be subsidiary. For this reason I attach great importance to the plan pursued by an excellent friend of mine, who told me, many years since, that having selected his text, his next object was to write the *title* of his sermon, or, in other words, to describe in terms the great object of the discourse. This, or something equivalent to it, is, in my judgment, necessary to give unity to a sermon; and all must admit that this is important. A desultory, ram-

bling, disjointed address is never likely to be productive of important practical results. The mind of the speaker, and the attention and conviction of the hearers, should be directed to one important conclusion; and to this every part of the sermon should be made subservient.

But, besides this unity, there must also generally be a division of the subject into parts. I am well aware that this mode is rejected by two classes of persons. Some think it too stiff and formal, and prefer what they are pleased to call "an easy and natural developement of the subject." Others really make the arrangement, but conceal the plan of the discourse, and make no announcement of their divisions. We are decidedly of opinion that both these greatly err. The first, unless possessed of very uncommon powers of mind, must generally deliver very desultory discourses; and the second, with equal certainty, deprive their hearers of a most important means of following the preacher in his argument or exhortation, and greatly diminish his means of retaining the sermon in his memory. I will here give, for the purpose of showing the advantage of this kind of arrangement, the plan of a few sermons preached by our most eminent ministers.

First, we refer to our founder, the Rev. John Wesley.

Eph. ii. 8: "By grace are ye saved through faith." After a brief exordium, these divisions are propounded: I. What faith it is through which we are saved. II. What is the salvation which is through faith. III. How we may answer some objections. This sermon is entitled "Salvation by Faith:" that is its subject; and all its parts naturally tend to the elucidation of this great doctrine.

The next we also select from the same eminent minister: it is called "Justification by Faith." Rom. iv. 5: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." After an introduction, which shows the importance of the inquiry, How may a sinner be justified before God? the following inquiries are stated and answered: I. What is the general ground of this whole doctrine of justification? II. What justification is. III. Who are they that are justified? and, IV. On what terms are they justified?

We add from the same author his outline of a sermon entitled "The Way to the Kingdom." Mark i. 15: "The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." "These words," he observes, "naturally lead us to consider, I. The nature of true religion, here termed by our

Lord 'the kingdom of God;' and, II. The way thereto, which he points out in these words, 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel.'"

The following is by the Rev. Charles Wesley. The sermon is entitled, "Awake, thou that sleepest." The preacher puts forth his subject thus: "In discoursing on these words, I shall, with the help of God, I. Describe the sleepers to whom they are spoken; II. Enforce the exhortation, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead;' and, III. Explain the promise made to such as do awake and arise: 'Christ shall give thee light.'"

The Rev. John Fletcher, preaching from 2 Cor. v. 17, after a brief introduction, in which he states the necessity of regeneration, opens the subject thus: I. What we must understand by regeneration, or becoming a new creature. II. What are the causes that concur to the work of regeneration. III. Why regeneration is so necessary to salvation.

The following is an outline of a sermon from the pen of the same sainted minister:—

Heb. iv. 2: "Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them," &c.

I. The everlasting gospel was preached to the Jews.

1. In the promises:—The woman's seed—the seed of Abraham, Shiloh, the Messiah, the Prophet like unto Moses.

2. Types:—Noah, Aaron, Joshua, brasen serpent, purification, sacrifices, as the daily lamb, the paschal lamb, the scape-goat, offers of free mercy. This and the promise are chiefly meant here.

II. The gospel is preached to us,—In the promises, types, antitypes, sacraments, daily offers of mercy and pardon.

III. The word preached did not profit them.

They remained, 1. Unconvinced; 2. Unholy; 3. Unhappy; 4. Unfit for glory.

IV. The reason:—"It was not mixed with faith in them that heard it."

Faith is the ingredient without which the preaching of apostles, angels, and of Christ is lost.

Faith is that by which the preaching of babes avails.

The word is milk, food, physic, cordial. Faith sucks, eats, &c.

Faith is the gift of God, and the act of man.

It is like a treasure in a field. Dig for it.

Pardon is offered; accept it.



Gallios, beware. The king is courting a beggar's love.

There are spices and gold in the East Indies, which we believe though we have not seen. It is only fools who believe only when they see.

Faith is both a gospel blessing, and a term of success. It takes the word and promises. Mix them now.

Application : 1. Mischievous unbelief defeats the word, crucifies Christ.

2. Beware of it. Pray before, at, and after the word.

3. Do you profit? You have faith, *vice versâ*.

4. Ye careless, believe a God, death, hell, heaven.

5. Ye mourners, believe Christ, his blood, promises, will, power.

6. Believers, believe and profit—show it—tell of the, &c.

I will now place before you two or three specimens of Dr. Adam Clarke's mode of arranging a sermon.

Job xxii. 21—23 : The short introduction is given in these words : " More important advice than this was never given to man, nor can any be more necessary at all times, nor be urged by more powerful motives ; nor is it possible that the terms of the advice can be explained by clearer directions."

I. The advice : " Acquaint now thyself with him." With God.

II. The motives : " Thereby good shall come unto thee, and thou shalt be built up."

III. The directions : 1. Receive the law from his mouth.

2. Lay up his words in thy heart. 3. Put away iniquity from thy tabernacles.

The learned Doctor has entitled this sermon, " Acquaintance with God, and the benefits which result from it."

We give another from the same hand.

This sermon has the title of " God's willingness to save all men."

1 Tim. ii. 3—6 : After some prefatory observations, the preacher says : " Religion is the institution of God : it expresses his will, it manifests his perfections ; and as it concerns man, for whose sake alone the institution itself was formed and exists, it strongly points out the benevolence of its Author : because it is framed for the present and eternal good of the human race."

In the verses before us, the apostle lays down the principles

of this institution,—the end which it proposes,—and the means to be employed for the accomplishment of this end.

The Divine purpose is first summarily declared : I. God wills that all men should be saved. II. And, in order to this, that they should come to the knowledge of the truth.

The TRUTH which is to be known and acknowledged is next produced in its essential principles.

1. There is one God.

2. There is one Mediator between God and men.

3. This MEDIATOR is particularly characterised as the MAN CHRIST JESUS.

4. What he did as Mediator is next declared : he gave himself a ransom for all. And,

5. This system of truth is to be testified to men in due and proper times, that they may acknowledge it, and be finally saved.

We now add two sketches from the Rev. Richard Watson. The first of these is entitled, “The Gain of the World, and the Loss of the Soul.” (Matt. xvi. 26.) After a brief introduction, the preacher states, “Our present subject, therefore, is, the worth and danger of the soul ; and the solemn instruction which this view of the case is intended to convey.”

I. We are led by the text to reflect on the worth of the soul.

1. Upon the unlimited intellectual capacities of the soul.

2. Upon the moral as well as intellectual capacity of your nature.

3. On the capacity which the soul possesses for high and hallowed enjoyment.

4. On the singular care of God to recover the soul from its lost condition.

5. On the ardour with which beings not directly interested enter into the case of the final destiny of the soul of man.

II. The second part of our subject is the danger of the soul. It is in danger of being lost ; lost by the infliction of legal punishment ; and mulcted, and deprived of all its happiness and hope.

1. To such a soul the world is lost.

2. To such a one the grace of God is lost.

3. To a soul lost it is a terrible aggravation of all this, that, not only is punishment inflicted, but heaven itself is lost.

4. This leads to another view of this sad case, that the loss of the soul is the loss of hope.

III. Ponder those points of instruction which this view of the case was intended to impress on our hearts.

1. We are taught that this may be the case with each one of you individually.

2. We are taught that the opposite gain is put into our own power.

3. We are taught to compute the gain or the loss which must follow from our own decision: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The next is a sermon on "the new birth." (John iii. 8.) After an introduction, the preacher proposes to consider:—

I. The nature of that moral change expressed in the text by the phrase, "born of the Spirit."

If we make scripture its own interpreter, and compare spiritual things with spiritual, we shall find that this change is,

1. A change from darkness to light; that is, from ignorance, unacquaintance with ourselves and the things of God, to such an acquaintance as shall be sufficient for our salvation. This implies,

2. The utter destruction of the power of sin in the heart.

3. This change introduces us into new connexions and relations.

4. The change implied in being "born of the Spirit" supposes the creation of new principles.

II. The agency by which this change is effected. We are to be "born of the Spirit," by the direct influence of the Spirit of God on the soul.

III. The difficulties which may appear to be attached to this doctrine cannot be fairly urged as objections to it.

That there are difficulties in religious matters, we allow. They may arise from three sources:—

1. Our own inaptitude.

2. A second class of difficulties arises from our confused notions on the subject of religion itself.

3. And, thirdly, difficulties will arise from the very nature of the case.

I conclude by remarking:—

1. Our ignorance of these things is a great reproach to us.

2. Recollect that any thing which leaves us short of this great change is comparatively of no use to us.

3. This is so necessary that a man cannot enter the kingdom of God hereafter without it.



I think, these examples will give the young preacher a better idea of the course to be taken in the arrangement of a sermon, than any rules or directions which I can offer. He will see here, that what we want to do is to bring the mind of the Holy Spirit, the meaning of the word of God, to bear, in all its weight and power, on the human judgment, heart, and conscience. Of course, different minds will deal with the same portions of scripture in different ways; but we think it will generally be found most desirable for the preacher to get the sense and application of a text clearly arranged in his own mind, so that he may present the several points to his hearers in a natural and orderly manner, and at the same time; so that all these parts may conduce to present the one great design, object, or truth of the text fully before the people. This course appears most likely to fix the word in the memory, and to produce the greatest effect on the mind of those who hear.

A word or two on the introduction and conclusion of sermons will close this topic.

Some introductory remarks are generally deemed proper and necessary, inasmuch as people are not supposed to be at once in a suitable state of mind to receive expositions of holy scripture, or arguments in support of its teaching. The first thing to be remembered here is, that these preliminary observations be really *introductory* to the subject of the text, and adapted to prepare the mind for its reception. We have heard an exordium which would do almost equally well for any text. Avoid this generality, and keep your subject fully in view from the beginning: bring your people to it as easily and as soon as possible; for an introduction should be short: brevity is its essential excellence: if lengthened, it defeats the object it is meant to serve. An introduction should always, whatever the subject, be so conceived as to impress the people with the conviction that the preacher feels himself charged with the communication of the word of God, that it is this which he is anxious to present to their mind. It should therefore be clear, simple, and serious.

The conclusion of a sermon must, of course, vary with the subject; but it should always have a practical tendency, and should, indeed, aim to fix the truth delivered fully in the mind, not merely as opinions or sentiments, but as operative agents which, under the teaching and power of the Holy Ghost, are to work out our salvation.

We now briefly notice the last thing proposed respecting a sermon,—*the way* in which it should be delivered.

And here I would first remark on the mode or style of speaking to be adopted. We do not present ourselves to our congregations as orators, to deliver an address. Let me beseech you to avoid every appearance of this kind. We do profess to teach them the most important and solemn truth : we are not merely teachers, in the ordinary sense, we are more than teachers. If we have any right to the position which we occupy, we are preachers of the gospel of Christ, and ought, therefore, always to speak as men burdened with the truth of God, for the instruction, benefit, and salvation of mankind. There should, therefore, be nothing merely declamatory on the one hand, or conversational on the other, in our manner of address. We speak not our own words, but the message of the gospel ; and we must make this fully apparent to our hearers, as well as maintain a sense of it fully in our own recollection and feeling. Nor need we fear that this will lead us into any vain assumption or dogmatism, unless our minds are in a very improper state. Who ever spoke with such authority as the Saviour ? Who ever displayed the majesty of the truth with power equal to him ? Yet where will you find an equal display of love, pity, humility, and deep interest in the souls of mankind ? Copy his spirit, endeavour in your manner and feelings to put on his mind, and let this move you to a corresponding mode of address.

This leads me to another remark. Avoid all affectation of learning, learned quotations, and the mention of eminent authors, or men of past ages, except on very rare and very special occasions. Use the words which are commonly employed by the people, and the meaning of which they can comprehend without an effort. But, on the other hand, keep far away from every thing low, vulgar, and calculated to offend a delicate taste, or to excite disgust. If you were standing in the presence of your sovereign, and in her name delivering a message to the people, you would not think it a suitable opportunity for displaying any accomplishment or excellence you might chance to possess ; your object would be to give forth, with all its prominence and authority, the royal will. From a proper and natural respect for this authority, you would aim at strict propriety ; you would anxiously avoid sullyng the royal message with your ignorance or defects ; but you would not employ an action or use a word which would be likely to call off the attention of the hearers from the royal message to the person who delivered it ; still less would you, in such circumstances, descend to any thing low, mean, or unworthy of the occasion.

You will surely be disposed to pay as much respect and homage to your God and Saviour as you would to an earthly monarch.

Endeavour, also, to deliver your sermons with a suitable action and tone of voice. I am well aware how difficult it is to give intelligible and useful advice on these topics. All I shall attempt, therefore, will be, to caution you against prevalent and acknowledged improper practices. You have seen some men deliver a sermon with as perfect absence of all appearance of emotion as if it proceeded from a statue; while, on the other hand, you have witnessed the most violent gesticulations employed from first to last, as if the apostle had written, "Bodily exercise profiteth *every thing*." Now, both of these cannot be the most excellent way; indeed, neither is. I would advise you to avoid these extremes. Enter on your subject with calm seriousness of spirit and of manner. Develope it, not as though it required any violent effort on your part to give it weight and effect, but rather as unfolding the profound and mighty "word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." Proceed in your discourse, with a steady view to the salvation of souls, and in faithful dependence on the Holy Spirit's aid; and if in this effort your spirit is stirred by the vast interests which are at stake in the souls before you, or your soul is melted beneath a sense of the infinite condescension and love of God, and his compassion for perishing sinners,—or, if the terrors of the Lord, and the thunders of his power, are so vividly revealed to your mind as to raise up indescribable emotion in your soul,—do not endeavour to crush these feelings, or to conceal their action. The Lord has chosen to speak to man by man, that the word of God, coming to the conscience with the demonstration of the Spirit, may also come with all the persuasion and sympathy of the human intellect and of human feeling. Do not smother these emotions, but control and guide them into suitable action and expression, and you will be able to discharge your duty with propriety and effect.

Perhaps no better direction can be given as to the manner of delivery, than that a sermon should begin in such a tone of voice as would be employed in earnest conversation. This will allow ample opportunity for raising it in the more emphatic parts of the address, and for lowering it when required. It is a common fault of young preachers to begin in a loud tone of voice, and then as they warm with their subject to rise into a kind of scream. This is equally injurious to the speaker, and distressing to the hearers: it consequently greatly militates against the efficiency of preaching. Other preachers acquire a



habit of dropping the voice at the close of a sentence, so that the last word, or even words, cannot be heard ; in which case the hearer has, by an effort of mind, to guess-out the meaning of the preacher ; a practice which is equally objectionable and injurious.

I am well aware that when these, or other faults of delivery, may have acquired the force of habit, it will be very difficult, and in some instances even impossible, entirely to remove them. Young preachers can, however, always guard against such errors ; and even older ones may, by care and attention, at least in some measure correct and improve their manner, if, indeed, they cannot render it faultless.

I have now to direct your attention to the impelling motives which should lead us to a faithful discharge of this important duty.

The first of these motives which I present to your consideration is the boundless value of human souls. What can compare with this ? Where will you look for its equivalent ? Search among the hoarded treasures of monarchs, or in the coffers of the most successful collectors of this world's wealth ; you can never find the price of a soul. Rise to the highest pinnacle of earthly honour, might, and glory, or sink into the deepest abyss of this world's want, suffering, and infamy ; and you will find nothing comparable to the height of happiness and glory which a soul may realise, nor to the illimitable ruin, misery, and perdition to which it may sink.

Consider the human soul in the vast extent of its capacities and powers. You cannot think of it, but you feel that it is great beyond comparison with all other created things. Not limited by time or space, it throws back its researches to the womb of time, listens to the first life-giving words which God addressed to our embryo universe, hears the song which the morning stars sang together, when the sons of God shouted for joy. Returning from this ancient contemplation, we can fly over all the future fields of human history, and see the last day of an expiring world, and realise the wreck of all nature, and the awful realities of the great judgment. See a soul in the cloisters of Cambridge sending forth the searching inquiries of a lofty spirit into the depths of space,—depths which mock the application of measured distance ; and there, balancing conflicting agencies and powers, until at length he says, “ Here a world ought to be found ; ” and then, by the application of a wondrous apparatus, one of the most glorious triumphs of the human mind, he discerns the stranger orb pursuing his way

silently through space. The soul of man in itself is the wonder of creation. You may take any single faculty or power of the mind, and follow it out to an infinite extent. Perhaps, however, that which presents the soul's greatness in the most affecting point of view is its vast capacity for happiness or misery. To what beatific joy we may rise,—to what boundless, inconceivable misery we may descend! And this is raised to the highest possible degree by our immortality. Man possesses a capacity for enjoyment, and may progress in happiness beyond our conception. He can feel misery, and endure inconceivable torment; but he cannot cease to exist: so that, if ever humanity is placed in an unalterable condition, everlasting happiness or misery must be its portion. And this, remember, is not an accident which may occur to some few of our hearers: it is the law of their existence. Their obtaining this infinite happiness, and their avoiding unspeakable and everlasting torture, must depend on their reception or rejection of the gospel. How fearfully important, then, is our position! How great our responsibility! How terrible to think that our coldness, indifference, or unfaithfulness of any other kind, may prevent the gospel from being the savour of life unto life to many that hear us!

But we should further consider, that, vast as are our capacities, and boundless our duration, and, consequently, infinite the value of a soul, no one soul can be considered as entirely separate and distinct from others. We live in society. Every man exercises an influence for good or for evil on his fellows. While, therefore, a soul remains in its natural lost and fallen condition, its influence will be exerted in opposition to the truth. This may not be intended. Some unconverted persons may, and do, indeed, earnestly desire to avoid resisting the truth, or aiding and supporting what is evil; but it is inevitable. The words of the Saviour will ever remain true, "He that is not with me is against me." The influence of a depraved and corrupt heart must be corrupting. In considering the value of a soul, therefore, we must consider not merely its simple and individual interests, but also all that good or evil which may result from the influence and agency of his future life and conduct.

Ponder, then, my dear brethren, this great subject. See men around you toiling with desperate and continued self-denial, and painful exertion, to accumulate a little of this world's wealth. You know others are daring all the terrible dangers of fields of slaughter and blood, for honourable distinc-

tion. You have a nobler object, a more glorious prize, who have hanging on your lips blood-bought souls, spirits redeemed by the passion and death of the Lord Jesus. He has given you the gospel, which is able to save these souls. Armed with this power, you may follow the poor sinner to all the depth of his danger and ruin; and raise him, from guilt and sin and hell, to the favour and fellowship of God.

Shall we not exert ourselves in such a work? Shall we not bear about with us, in all our way, the burden of souls? Shall it not be our leading thought through the week, "What portion of God's truth shall we use, and how shall we use it so that we may save souls?" Let not your skirts be stained with the blood of souls. Let none who hear us say, "O yes, they preach and talk cleverly; but they do not care for our souls."

But I must present to your notice another consideration, as an impelling motive to zealous effort in this great work. The advancement of the Divine honour, and the promotion of that great cause for which the Saviour died, depend on our devotedness, fidelity, and success.

We can only glance at this point; but it must not escape notice. Consider, then, the great scheme of redemption, arising out of the counsels of the eternal Jehovah, the result of the boundless love of God to man. See it, in all its transcendent displays of Divine wisdom, its plenary revelations of almighty power. Mark its glorious manifestation of God in miracles, prophecies, and in the special providence which it called into operation, and sustained for thousands of years, for the purpose of working out the incarnation of the Son of God. Go on, and contemplate the humiliation, work, passion, and death of Jesus. Rest in profound meditation over the mysteries of Gethsemane and Calvary, the resurrection and glorious ascension of the Lord; and then ask yourselves, Why was all this done? Where is the key to these ten thousand wonders? Is it here?—Was it to display the matchless glory of Divine wisdom, love, and power? to show forth the priceless, peerless honour of God's dear Son? Yes, it was to do this, but to do it in a certain way. It was to bring this glory to God, this honour to Christ, in *the salvation of souls*.

If souls are not saved, Christ is not glorified, Satan triumphantly retains his prey. Laboured discourses may be delivered, eloquence may be displayed, efforts of a high or a low order may be put forth; but these are not the results for which the Master looks; it is not for these that the Spirit of our glorified Saviour yearns; these are not the objects for which his soul is

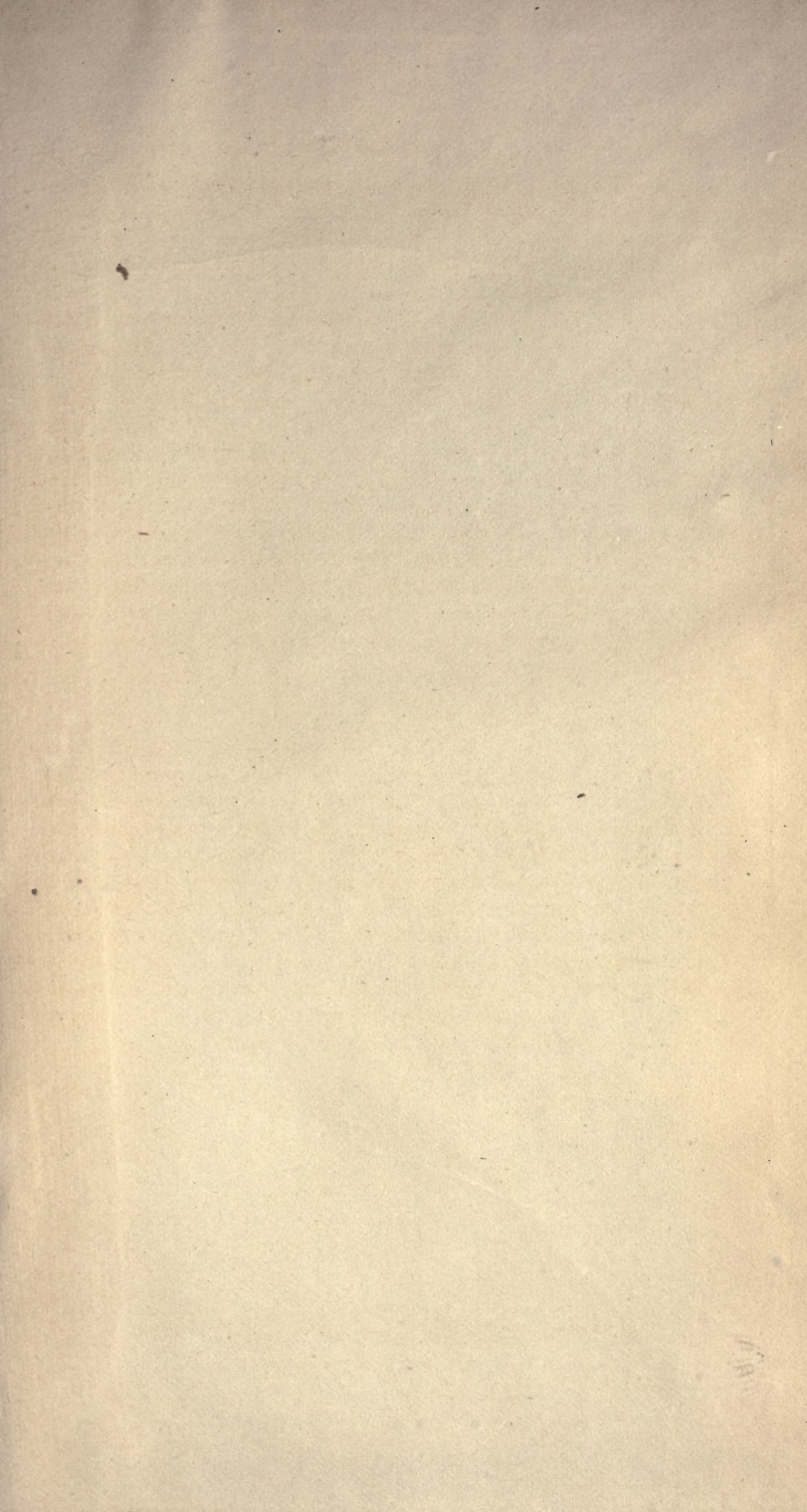


in travail. No! the conversion of souls, and the building them up in holiness, are the great objects, the grand ends, for which all this apparatus of mercy was devised; and it is these with which the honour of God, and the glory of Christ, are fully and continually identified.

Do you, then, my brethren, love God, and feel deeply concerned for the honour of your Saviour? Are you praying day by day for the promotion of his glory, the prostration of his foes, the accomplishment of his great work? Are you anticipating, as your chief joy, the glorious acclaim which soon shall vibrate through the universe, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ?" If this is your case, then renew your efforts, gird up the loins of your mind, study the word of God diligently, pray for the Spirit's aid and the presence of your Saviour continually, believe in Christ fully; and do all this for the great, grand, glorious purpose of saving souls from death, and of leading on believers to the experience of holiness.

I draw this my final address to a close. And, in doing so, I must, in justice to my own feelings, express my deep conviction of my insufficiency for the work which I have undertaken, and which is now brought to a conclusion. But, impressive as is this sense of insufficiency, I am supported by the fullest confidence, that I have not misled you as to the great object and end of preaching, and the motives which should induce us to employ yet greater diligence and devotedness in our work. No, my brethren! we must "catch men," must instrumentally save souls, and thus glorify Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, and hath given unto us the word of reconciliation. May God give us the grace to do so yet more abundantly, for Christ's sake! Amen.

THE END.







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